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THE UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS: THE 911 FORCE IN THE
POST-9/11 WORLD

by

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Abstract

Today, the Marine Corps is torn between the missions it must *perform* to address the largely irregular threats that dominate the 21st Century security environment and the missions it must, by law, *prepare for* against potential yet unlikely near peer conventional threats. This paper intends to challenge the relevancy of the Marine Corps's current Title 10, United States Code, roles and missions by showing that this tasking finds its roots in the pre-World War Two security environment and has little application to the 21st Century security environment.

Additionally, by examining today's and tomorrow's threat environment, this paper also contends that the Marine Corps, as the Nation's naval "force in readiness," is the service best suited to address the largely irregular threats that will pose the greatest challenges to American national security interests. Finally, several recommendations are offered on how the Marine Corps can better organize, train, and equip to address the 21st Century security environment.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

The mission changed, but nobody changed the mission statement.¹

It is time for the Marine Corps's roles and missions to change. The missions that the Marine Corps has performed over the past thirty years and, more importantly, the emerging missions the nation needs the Marine Corps to perform in the future are not necessarily congruent with the missions the Marine Corps has been assigned. More specifically, the Marine Corps has performed the numerous and varied tasks required to address the largely irregular threats that have continuously emerged in an ever-evolving security environment while it's post-WWII/Cold War derived and legislatively mandated missions dictate a more conventional role. Presently, the Marine Corps finds itself fighting a fight that many experts believe characterizes the nature of warfare in the 21st century, specifically low-tech, irregular warfare. Accordingly, the 2006 Quadrennial Defense Review directed that the Marine Corps increase its focus on irregular threats. Simultaneously, the Marine Corps is obligated by Title 10 United States Code (USC) to prepare for missions that are based on a 1947 security environment that was mostly oriented on a conventional and nuclear "near peer" threat. Clearly there is a conflict here.

Today, the Marine Corps is torn between the missions it *must* perform to address *existing and persistent* threats and the missions it *might* perform to address *potential yet unlikely* threats.

Can the nation afford to ignore both the history of the last half of the 20th century as well as the threat predictions of the first half of the 21st century by treating the high-percentage and pervasive unconventional threats that continue to challenge American national security interests as some sort of annoying sideshow? This paper contends that the answer is “no” and that the Marine Corps, as the nation’s force in readiness, is the force best suited to carry the daunting task of addressing the irregular end of the “spectrum of conflict” in the 21st century (Figure 1).

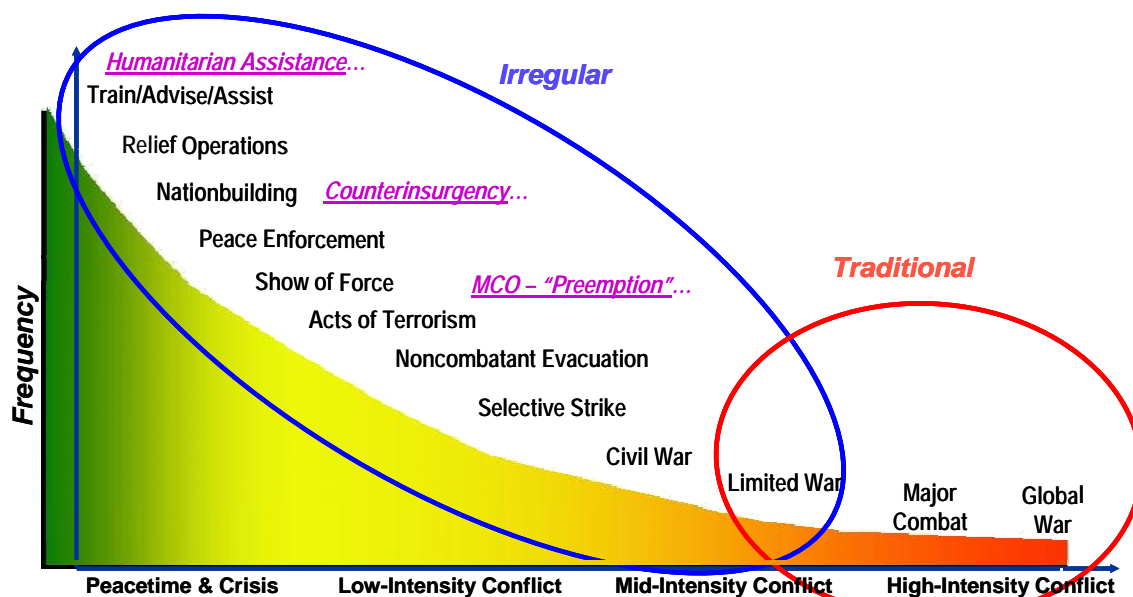


Figure 1. 21st Century Spectrum of Conflict²

Some may argue that a full-blown commitment on the part of the Marine Corps toward organizing, training, and equipping to engage on the irregular end of the threat spectrum would be an overly simplified “knee jerk” reaction to a unique and temporary situation in which the nation now finds itself with the Global War on Terrorism (GWOT). Such a commitment to “irregular” warfare would weaken the nation’s ability to fight at the “high end” in what some consider an inevitable conflict with an emerging “near peer” competitor such as China or lesser

conventional and emerging nuclear threats such as North Korea or Iran. Moreover, some fear that, if the Marine Corps took its primary focus off of a potential high-end conventional threat and committed to irregular warfare, the Marine Corps's reputation and relevancy as the nation's "force in readiness" would be destroyed. Just the opposite is true. Future relevance will be dictated by the future threat environment, not by past successes.

An undeniable trend over the past thirty years has been that the threat environment has constantly moved warfare toward what is currently considered the irregular realm. Moreover, this trend has effectively challenged the theory that "if you can do the big war well, you can do the little ones, too." It is impossible to ignore that each victor of World War II has been defeated by unconventional forces at some time in the past sixty years, despite the fact that each possessed well equipped, modern, professional, and conventionally focused militaries. What the nation needs is a dedicated "24/7 force in readiness" that possesses the reach, mobility, discipline, professionalism, and martial spirit required to address the adaptive and persistent unconventional threats that exist today and that are likely to become more threatening and sophisticated tomorrow. The Marine Corps clearly fits this bill and it is time that the Marine Corps' roles and missions be oriented accordingly to face a "future [that is] characterized by irregular wars"³ and address "the non-traditional, asymmetric challenges of this new century."⁴

The purpose of this paper is twofold. The first is to challenge the relevancy of the Marine Corps's current Title 10, USC assigned roles and missions in the presence of the 21st century security environment. The second is to argue that the Marine Corps, provided it adopt relatively minor modifications, is the force of choice to engage the predominantly unconventional threats of the 21st century simply because it possesses the expeditionary culture and flexibility needed to address such a dynamic environment. Specifically, the Marine Corps's primary mission should

be formally changed to serving as America's "911" force designed to address the diverse unconventional global threats that will constitute enduring, damaging challenges to American national interests in the decades to come. This is not to say that the Marine Corps will not face nor have a role in any conventional fight of the future. Rather, it is simply a realization that the enormity of the security challenges facing the United States makes it impossible to train and equip adequately and effectively to address the entire breadth of an ever expanding, complex, and lethal "spectrum of conflict."

It is also time to recognize that relevance does not equate to competing with the other armed services for the same mission sets. Jointness, interdependence, and transformation allow each of the services to focus on the portions of the spectrum that they are best suited to address. For the Marine Corps, that means a primary focus on the frequent and rapidly emerging small wars that have been and will continue to be the predominate challenges to American national security.⁵ Transformation offers an immediate window of opportunity to make the substantive philosophical and organizational changes needed to maintain the Marine Corps's effectiveness and relevance in tomorrow's uncertain and constantly changing world. The Marine Corps should step through that window.

Chapter 2

Mission: A Force In Readiness

A long habit of not thinking a thing wrong, gives it a superficial appearance of being right, and raises at first a formidable outcry in defense of custom. But the tumult soon subsides. Time makes more converts than reason.

Thomas Paine, *Common Sense*

While the situation may change, making the task obsolete, the intent is more lasting and continues to guide our actions.⁶

MCDP-1, Warfighting

In 1920, when Major General Commandant John A. Lejeune identified *readiness* as “the real, perennial mission of the Marine Corps,”⁷ he masterfully established the core essence of the Marine Corps not only for his time, but for future generations of Marines. In essence, Lejeune had identified the *purpose* of the Marine Corps. As such, the simple concept of readiness has been the identifying feature of the Marine Corps in the 20th century as it fought to perform the missions the Nation needed not to mention preserving itself as a warfighting organization. Lejeune, as a lead reformer within a then moribund Marine Corps, used the concept to overcome the Corps’s vanguard of hidebound traditionalism (most notably established by former Commandants Charles Heywood and George Elliott) that could not detach itself from the traditional Marine roles of ship guards, naval base security, landing party service, and naval gunnery. Lejeune’s concept of a Marine Corps that was organized and prepared to serve as

advanced naval base forces around the globe was considered almost heretical to the Marine traditionalists of the early 1900s⁸, yet it proved to be the seed corn for the amphibious doctrine that was so critical to Allied success in both the Pacific and European theaters of operations during World War II. In 1946, then-Commandant General Alexander Vandegrift, fighting for the Marine Corps' very existence following World War II, invoked the concept of readiness to defend the existence of a Marine Corps in a nuclear-oriented, Air Force-centric defense establishment. Korea soon proved Vandegrift's contention that a seagoing force in readiness was still required to engage the very real conventional threats of a bipolar world. Even today as the Marine Corps faces a fundamentally different threat spectrum than that of Lejeune's time, the first statement in General Hagee's (the 33rd Commandant of the Marine Corps) vision for the 21st century Marine Corps was "We remain the Nation's premier expeditionary combat force-in-readiness."⁹ Clearly, the idea that the nation requires a "24/7" ready force has stood the test of time regardless of the prevailing security environment.

A question that inevitably arises when considering readiness in concert with Marine Corps roles and missions is "Ready for what?" This question can only be answered in the context of the prevailing and, more importantly, emerging security environment of the time. At the turn of the 20th century, reform minded Marine officers such as Eli Cole, Dion Williams, John Russell, George Barnett, and, most notably, John A. Lejeune saw that America's new status as a global imperial power with increasing political and economic interests in the world mandated that the Marine Corps transform itself if it were to be relevant in national defense. The reformers recognized that the nation needed a new kind of force, an advanced naval base force, that was organized, trained, and equipped to seize and defend overseas bases as a means to

buttress American markets, colonial holdings, and resources against the expansionism of rival imperial powers, namely Japan.

The reformers were not the only ones who thought in these terms. As early as 1908, President Theodore Roosevelt recognized the need for a force to support a national naval strategy designed to protect American overseas interests. In that year, he signed Executive Order 969 that assigned the Marine Corps the following duties:

- To garrison the different navy yards and naval stations, both within and beyond the continental limits of the United States.
- To furnish the first line of the mobile defense of naval bases and naval stations beyond the continental limits of the United States.
- To man such naval defenses, and to aid in the manning, if necessary, of such other defenses, as may be erected for the defense of naval bases and naval stations beyond the continental limits of the United States.
- To garrison the Isthmian Canal Zone, Panama.
- To furnish such garrisons and expeditionary forces for duties beyond the seas as may be necessary in time of peace.¹⁰

Obviously, Roosevelt was not concerned about the Marine Corps' traditional missions of the past. He was more concerned about the ever-increasing American imperial interests throughout the globe and the need to defend them. As such, he wanted an expeditionary force capable of performing open-ended and geographically distant missions that were necessary both in war and peace. Simply stated, Roosevelt succinctly defined what readiness meant for the Marine Corps as it related to the national interests of the United States in 1908.

In spite of this clear and unambiguous guidance, the senior leadership of the Marine Corps proved resistant to change. As Allan Millet points out,

[T]he main obstacles to creating the advanced base force [were] Headquarters Marine Corps and Congress. The first would not provide the men, the latter the necessary appropriations for equipment and contingency supplies...With the exception of a handful of Marine officers like Williams, Cole, and Russell, the Marine Corps did not show much official interest in the advanced base force. It certainly did not try to reorder its many functions in order to carry out the Navy Department's instructions on the advanced base force. Although the need for advanced bases was far more obvious in 1909 than it had

been in 1900, the Navy and the Marine Corps had not yet done much to provide the men and arms to make the advanced base force an operational reality.¹¹

Why the resistance? Executive Order 969 removed the traditional Marine Corps missions of ships guards, landing party service, and naval gunnery and directed a more expeditionary role as an advanced naval base force. In opposition, then-Commandant George Elliott and his staff argued that Executive Order 969 would inevitably lead to the absorption of the Marine Corps into the army, thereby marking its end as a military organization. In light of these fears, the Marine Corps leveraged its close relationship with Congress, particularly through Representative Thomas Butler (the father of Marine Brigadier General Smedley Butler), in order to add language to the 1909 Naval Appropriations Act that called for the preservation of the Marine ships guards mission. Simultaneously, despite the fact that the Naval Appropriations Act still maintained the expeditionary mission language of Executive Order 969, the Marine Corps made no appreciable effort to adopt the advanced naval base mission.

Fortunately, the reformers persisted in redefining the Marine Corps' role. In 1911, the Marine Corps Association (MCA), along with its accompanying periodical *The Marine Corps Gazette*, was formed as a vehicle to educate officers on topics of professional concern and, as such, proved to be an effective forum for the spread of the advance base force mission message. By 1916, the reformist efforts came to fruition when Commandant Major General George Barnett and his headquarters acknowledged that "the fortification and defense of naval advance or temporary bases for the use of the fleet has been made the principal war mission of the Marine Corps."¹² This commitment to the reformers' vision assured the institutional conditions that allowed detailed study into the advance base force mission throughout the 1920s and 1930s. Most notable of these studies was Major "Pete" Ellis' *712H Operation Plan: Advanced Base Operations in Micronesia, 1921*. This prescient and far-reaching document not only outlined the

requirements for the Pacific amphibious operations of World War II, it also advocated a *unique* and *specialized* role for the Marine Corps that diverged from past seagoing duties and service as lightly armed colonial infantry used for “small war” purposes. In Ellis’ own words,

To effect a landing under the sea and shore conditions obtaining and in the face of enemy resistance requires careful training and preparation, to say the least; and this along Marine Corps lines. It is not enough that the troops be skilled infantry men or artillery men of high morale: they must be skilled water men and jungle men who know it can be done — Marines with Marine training.¹³

Although it took thirteen years, the Marine Corps now had a *conceptual* foundation that articulated its purpose in a new and developing security environment. More importantly, the advance force concept functionally outlined the future doctrine, procurement requirements, and organizational construct needed to prepare the Marine Corps for the pending challenges of World War II.

At the time, some felt that such specialization at the expense of traditional missions would pigeonhole the Marine Corps to such an extent that the relevancy of the Marine Corps would be called into question. Even more worrisome to these traditionalists was the Joint Army and Navy Board’s 1927 publication of *Joint Army and Navy Action*. This document officially recognized the Marine Corps’s specialized amphibious role and directed that the Marine Corps “provide and maintain forces for land operations in support of the Fleet for the initial seizure and defense of advanced bases and for such limited auxiliary land operations as are essential to the prosecution of the naval campaign.”¹⁴ Despite the concerns of the traditionalists, however, the specialized amphibious mission proved to be the key to preparing the Marine Corps for challenges of World War II. Simply stated, the reformists had identified the right mission that defined *readiness* for the emerging security environment. Just as importantly, the amphibious mission as it related to readiness would be instrumental to the institutional survival of the Marine

Corps. As it turned out, the language of *Joint Army and Navy Action* of 1927 “crudely foreshadowed that of the National Security Act 20 years later.”¹⁵

Despite embracing the amphibious assault mission, the Marine Corps was not in a good position to make the significant *organizational* and *doctrinal* changes needed to prepare for the seaborne operations envisioned by its reform movement. From 1925 to 1932, the Marine Corps was primarily involved in expeditionary operations in Central America and China in support of State Department endeavors. As a result, the Marine Corps was unable to significantly develop amphibious doctrine, train to the highly specialized mission of amphibious assault, or procure the equipment needed to support such operations.

However, despite the far flung operations and puny budgets, the Marine Corps reformers did not lose sight of where they wanted to go. Despite the lack of resources to realize their vision, the reformers thought, wrote, and refined their ideas. By 1933, support to expeditionary operations in Nicaragua and China began to wane. This window of opportunity, in conjunction with the strong urging of the Marine Corps’ senior leadership (now convinced the reformists were correct), prompted the Navy Department to direct a significant reorganization of the Marine Corps. General Order 241, issued in 1933, established the Fleet Marine Force (FMF), an organizational construct dedicated to the advance base force and amphibious assault missions.¹⁶ Just as important, the Marine Corps published the *Tentative Manual for Landing Operations* in 1934 that outlined the basic doctrinal principles of amphibious operations that would direct future Marine Corps training and procurement efforts. The most significant outcomes of these organizational and doctrinal advancements in the interwar years were the execution of several Fleet Landing Exercises (FLEXs), the development of landing assault equipment (most notably

the Higgins boat), the increased emphasis on Marine aviation, and the recognition that there was an extreme shortage in troop transport ships within the Navy.¹⁷

By the time the United States found itself immersed in WWII, the Marine Corps was well poised to execute amphibious operations across the expanses of the Pacific Theater of Operations (PTO). Due to the organizational and intellectual investments made during the interwar years, the Marine Corps established a firm foundation from which it could effectively glean operational and tactical lessons and rapidly implement corrective actions as the war progressed. Nowhere is this more starkly seen than in the advancements made between the battle of Tarawa in November 1943 and the assault on Tinian in July of 1944. Over the course of eight months, the Marine Corps was able to progress from the horrendous bloodletting of Tarawa – a battle that called into question the efficacy of amphibious assaults and almost earned a congressional investigation due to its extreme casualty rates – to the operational precision of Tinian, an assault that General Holland “Howlin’ Mad” Smith described as “the perfect amphibious operation in the Pacific War.”¹⁸

Just as importantly, the Marine Corps’s iconic battles across the Pacific validated the reformist movement of the 1920s. Almost a quarter of a century before WWII, the reformers had the vision to define *readiness* within the context of the emerging security environment and the dogged determination to pursue the organizational and doctrinal changes needed to address that environment. Their efforts not only ensured the Marine successes in the Pacific, they raised the Marine Corps to the level of a strategically significant and decisive force that the nation sorely needed to secure victory in WWII. The fact that, on 6 August 1945, the *Enola Gay* launched from Tinian to deliver the first atomic bomb on Hiroshima is ample evidence of the decisive strategic contributions the Marine Corps made to the overall war effort in WWII.

After the war, however, the Marine Corps had to fight to not only to maintain the position it earned in WWII, but also for its very existence. Then Commandant, General Vandegrift, vehemently argued that the Marine Corps's specialized amphibious mission made the Marine Corps unique and the Nation's force in readiness. As the National Security Act of 1947 (NSA 1947) began to take shape, Vandegrift sought to achieve language that recognized the Marine Corps as an independent service headed by a service chief individually responsible to the Secretary of the Navy as well as language that dictated the Marine Corps's minimum force structure (specifically not less than three combat divisions and three air wings as well as the requisite amount of support services). Fortunately, Vandegrift was successful and NSA 1947 formally sanctioned the Marine Corps as the nation's amphibious assault specialists and standing force in readiness.¹⁹ As such, NSA 1947 proved to be a watershed event for the Marine Corps in that it provided the mission focus and organizational imperative that would guide the Marine Corps into the Korean War as well as throughout the first twenty-five years of the Cold War (to include Vietnam). NSA 1947 clearly dictated that the amphibious mission defined how the Marine Corps should be ready to serve as the nation's force in readiness.

Following the Vietnam War, however, the relevance of Marine Corps missions once again came into question. In light of America's Vietnam experience, some questioned whether the missions and organization of the Marine Corps as delineated in NSA 1947 were still relevant within the context of the prevailing security environment. To traditionalists, the security environment had not changed and Vietnam was simply an anomaly of failed policy. Therefore, the Marine Corps's mission and organization were appropriate to address present and future threats. Essentially, the United States was still engaged in the Cold War against the Soviet Union and there was continued concern that China was an ever-increasing threat in the Straits of

Taiwan. As such, according to traditionalists, there was a clear need to maintain amphibious ready forces capable of addressing conventional threats on a global scale.

Conversely, critics like Martin Binkin and Jeffrey Record contended that the amphibious mission was hopelessly anachronistic in the face of modern conventional threats and that “The Corps must shift its principal focus from seaborne assault to a more appropriate mission, such as garrisoning America’s remaining outposts in Asia or defending Central Europe. The golden age of amphibious warfare is now the domain of historians, and the Marine Corps no longer needs a unique mission to justify its existence.”²⁰ In other words, Binkin and Record felt that the Marine Corps maintained too narrow a focus on the amphibious assault mission and, as a result, had created an unbalanced force of heavy firepower, aircraft, and light, slow foot mobile infantry that was not only incapable of countering the high-tech mechanized forces of the Soviet Union or the massed forces of China, it was too expensive to maintain. This position was critically flawed in that it assumed that the Cold War as well as conventional warfare would continue to dominate the global security environment.

A third critical and more insightful perspective proposed that Vietnam indicated a fundamental change in the nature of the security environment, and of warfare itself, and that the United States military had to change with it. As Barbara Tuchman observed in 1972,

The change [in the American military’s role] has been taking place over the past 20 years, while we lived through it without really noticing – at least I as a civilian didn’t notice. One needs to step outside a phenomenon in order to see its shape and one needs perspective to be able to look back and say, ‘*There* was the turning point.’ As you can now see, Korea was our first political war. The train of events since then indicates that the role of the military is coming to be, as exhibited by the Russians in Egypt and ourselves in Southeast Asia, one of intervention in the affairs of the client country to suit the advisor’s purpose...the task is to ‘assist foreign countries with internal security problems’ – a nice euphemism for counterinsurgency – ‘and perform functions having sociopolitical impact on military operations’...This is quite a change from defense of the continental United States, which the founders intended should be our only military function.²¹

In terms of the Marine Corps, this meant maintaining its expeditionary capability while reorienting itself on the unconventional threats of the time and preparing for the sociopolitical entanglements that would accompany such a reorientation.

With these varying perspectives, the Marine Corps found itself facing a new emerging security environment that challenged the prevailing definition of “readiness.” Whereas the Marine Corps had been able to equate readiness to a unique mission set since 1927, the emerging threat environment of the post-Vietnam era presented challenges that could not be thoroughly addressed by its NSA 1947 assigned roles and missions. However, instead of defining readiness in terms of a unique mission, the Marine Corps saw its future as a *general purpose* force able to address the entire spectrum of threats. As Allen Millet observed,

Reasonable men differed on the likelihood of a successful amphibious assault against an enemy armed with modern weapons; hence the Corps stressed that amphibious assault might be its most unique mission but not its only one. Instead it insisted that it provided a global force in readiness that did not depend exclusively upon fixed land bases and strategic airlift to perform a range of military missions short of direct warfare with the Soviet Union.²²

In other words, whereas the security environment of 1947 tied the unique mission of amphibious assault closely to readiness, the post-Vietnam security environment began to challenge this coupling. As such, the Marine Corps faced a situation where it was legislatively tasked with a unique mission set established in the context of the pre-World War II environment, but yet it was expected to actually perform a wide variety of missions that addressed the increasingly irregular post-Vietnam security environment. As a result, the Marine Corps felt compelled to “do it all.” Not only would the Marine Corps train and equip to fight the “high-end” conventional fight and maintain its forcible entry amphibious assault capabilities, it would also meet the requirements of those “military missions short of direct warfare.”

For the next thirty years, the general purpose force concept dominated Marine Corps organization, training, and procurement efforts. Unfortunately, the ability to resource such a wide range of mission sets with equipment and personnel presented a whole new range of challenges. Essentially the problem was that Congress and the Secretary of Defense expected the Marine Corps to perform its legislatively mandated, NSA 1947 missions as well as its newly assumed “lesser” missions without being resourced adequately to perform them all with equal effectiveness.²³ As a result, in the presence of the Cold War environment, the Marine Corps opted to prepare for the “high end” of the threat spectrum, procuring and training to engage in conventional warfare against a symmetrical Soviet threat. The assumption that “If you can do the big one, you can do the little ones, too” became an accepted operational norm. Regrettably, American experiences in Vietnam, Lebanon, Somalia, and now Iraq indicate that this is rarely the case.

But how relevant is the language of NSA 1947 in the context of today’s security environment, particularly when one considers that the Marine Corps must organize, train, and equip to meet its functional responsibilities? Presently, the Marine Corps, in conjunction with the Navy, is assigned forty functions as per Department of Defense Directive (DoDD) 5100.1, *Functions of the Department of Defense and its Major Components*, a document that is primarily based on the roles and missions delineated in Title 10, U.S.C as per NSA 1947 and its subsequent amendments. Of these forty tasks, one is identified as a “primary function” as it is drawn directly from Title 10 and as such is the legislatively mandated mission focus of the Marine Corps:

Paragraph 6.6.2.2.2. To maintain the Marine Corps, which shall be organized, trained, and equipped to provide Fleet Marine Forces of combined arms, together with supporting air components, for service with the fleet in the seizure or defense of advanced naval bases and for the conduct of such land operations as may be essential to the prosecution

of a naval campaign. In addition, the Marine Corps shall provide detachments for the protection of naval property at naval stations and bases, and perform such other duties as the President or the Secretary of Defense may direct. However, these additional duties must not detract from, or interfere with, the operations for which the Marine Corps is primarily organized. These functions do not contemplate the creation of a second land army.²⁴

In order to perform this mission, Title 10 further mandates that “The Marine Corps, within the Department of the Navy, includes not less than three combat divisions and three air wings and such other land combat, aviation, and other services as may be organic therein.”²⁵ In analyzing this primary function and the Marine Corps’s mandated organizational construct, several points arise in terms of relevancy.

First, the core language of Title 10 describing the Marine Corps’s primary functions in today’s world is remarkably similar to that used by the Joint Army and Navy Board in 1927 when it directed that the Marine Corps “provide and maintain forces for land operations in support of the Fleet for the initial seizure and defense of advanced bases and for such limited auxiliary land operations as are essential to the prosecution of the naval campaign.” Such tasking had clear application in the pre-WWII and, to a lesser extent, the pre-Vietnam eras, but its relevancy to today’s environment is questionable. While seizing and defending “advanced naval bases” strikes an emotional chord in terms of Marine Corps heritage and culture, the fact of the matter is that *the world situation does not require naval forces to seize and defend advanced naval bases anymore*. American access to strategic overseas basing has been, and will continue to be, relatively stable. In cases where it may be questionable in today’s world, challenges to overseas basing rights will be resolved more by diplomatic settlements than military operations. Moreover, the Navy and Marine Corps’s current emphasis and investment in seabasing as a means to circumvent potential base denial situations further underscores the point that forcible seizure of advanced bases is no longer considered an acceptable or feasible option.

Second, independent naval campaigns contradict today's joint force concept. Although there typically is a naval component to a joint force campaign, the idea that naval forces will conduct sweeping unilateral maritime operations similar to those envisioned by "Pete" Ellis and subsequently executed in the Pacific during WWII does not take into account the realities of the global political and economic environment, the resource limitations of today's naval forces, and the doctrinal manner in which American forces fight today. This is not to say that amphibious operations are a thing of the past. Rather, it is a recognition that, of the five types of amphibious operations – amphibious assault, amphibious raid, amphibious demonstration, amphibious withdrawal, and other amphibious operations such as non-combatant evacuation operations (NEO) and humanitarian assistance/disaster relief (HA/DR) – amphibious assaults as part of naval campaigns designed to seize advanced naval bases have been eclipsed in level of likelihood and necessity by the other four categories of amphibious missions.

Third, with the exception of special base security missions (i.e., nuclear material and facility security), the Marine Corps no longer provides security detachments for the protection of naval stations and bases. In fact, the Navy informally performed this mission well before 9/11 and has now formally expanded this specific mission set by tasking the newly formed Naval Expeditionary Combat Command (NECC) with anti-terrorism/force protection (ATFP) and port security responsibilities.²⁶ This is significant in that the existence of such outdated tasking highlights the need to revisit Title 10 roles and functions in light of current resource constraints, present-day division of responsibilities between services, and the requirements of the prevailing security environment.

Fourth, the statutory requirement to maintain a minimum of three divisions and three air wings sprang from General Vandegrift's efforts to obtain a legislative guarantee to protect the

continued existence of the Marine Corps at a time when that existence was legitimately at risk. For the most part, the Marine Corps' force structure from the Korean War until the end of the Cold War was such that the Marine Corps could adequately, though not fully, support a three division and three air wing organization through forward basing and, since the 1980s, the Unit Deployment Program (UDP). As Table 1 below indicates, the average Marine Corps end strength (the number of Marines actually serving at a given time) during this period was maintained at approximately 190,000 to 200,000 Marines (excluding the Korea and Vietnam era increases).

Table 1. USMC Active Duty Personnel End Strengths (FY 1950-2005)²⁷

1950	74,279	1960	170,621	1970	259,737	1980	188,469	1990	196,652	2000	173,321
1951	192,620	1961	176,909	1971	212,369	1981	190,620	1991	194,040	2001	172,934
1952	231,967	1962	190,962	1972	198,238	1982	192,380	1992	184,529	2002	173,733
1953	249,219	1963	189,683	1973	196,098	1983	194,089	1993	178,379	2003	177,779
1954	223,868	1964	189,777	1974	188,802	1984	196,214	1994	174,158	2004	177,480
1955	205,170	1965	190,213	1975	195,951	1985	198,025	1995	174,639	2005	180,029
1956	200,780	1966	261,716	1976	192,399	1986	198,814	1996	174,883		
1957	200,861	1967	285,269	1977	191,707	1987	199,525	1997	173,906		
1958	189,495	1968	307,252	1978	190,815	1988	197,350	1998	173,142		
1959	175,571	1969	309,771	1979	185,250	1989	196,956	1999	172,641		

However, following the end of the Cold War and the subsequent reduction in forces of the early 1990s, the Marine Corps found itself performing the same, if not more, missions with approximately 20,000 fewer Marines, the equivalent of one infantry division's worth of personnel. The net result is that since the end of the Cold War with the collapse of the Soviet Union, the Marine Corps maintained three divisions and air wings on paper only. Despite the direction of NSA 1947, the Marine Corps has neither the assets nor the personnel to fully support the legally mandated forces levels needed to execute at the sustained level required by standing operational plans (OPLANs).

Fifth, although not specified in Title 10, DoDD 5001.1 directs that a second land army not be developed. However, the readiness requirements of maintaining a general purpose force as well as a self-imposed institutional requirement to demonstrate relevancy in the face of the Cold War threat pushed the Marine Corps to that end. Much of the Marine Corps' doctrinal and procurement energies of the late 1980s went into developing a concept of how a MEF would fight at the corps level alongside the army as part of a major conventional fight. When the Cold War ended, few questioned whether progress in this direction should continue, and so, well into the 1990s, the Marine Corps emphasized studying and developing corps-level planning and execution tactics, techniques, and procedures.²⁸ This "high end" focus produced a capability that, when supported by the preponderance of the Marine Corps' combat units and Army logistical and surface fire support assets, provided joint force commanders (JFCs) with an asymmetric corps that could be employed commensurately alongside an Army corps. The fact that the Marine Corps deployed and employed I MEF to great effectiveness in both Gulf Wars (1991 and 2003) as an independent corps under the command of the Combined Force Land Component Commander, and with equal component representation at the JFC level, indicates that the Marine Corps had indeed risen to the level of a separate and extremely capable land army. The question is, should this be a function of the Marine Corps?

Lastly, the fact that the current primary functions of the Marine Corps are largely based on a pre-WWII threat assessment directly raises questions as to the relevance of Title 10 tasking. Today, the language of Title 10 is remarkably similar to that of the 1927 Joint Army and Navy Board and, as such, has maintained a primary focus on "high end" (i.e., conventional) threats. But does this focus appropriately define *readiness* in the context of today's security environment? The events following Vietnam indicate that the answer is "no." The Department

of Defense (DoD) viewed the rapid and decisive victories in Grenada (1983), Panama (1989), and Kuwait (1991) as a validation of its conventional focus. However, as Colonel Thomas Hammes observed in *The Sling and the Stone*, the continued focus on conventional threats was based on the flawed assumption that “supposed future enemies will ignore the past and willingly fight America in a high-technology, fast-moving campaign that reinforces all our strengths while avoiding our weaknesses.”²⁹ In reality, the United States was not prepared to address the largely irregular and long-term conflicts faced in Lebanon, Nicaragua, the Balkans, and Somalia. Specifically, American forces had not fully anticipated the wide array of political, social, cultural, and economic variables that are so closely intertwined within irregular conflicts. This is in spite of the fact that, in the past 30 years, the United States has responded to just under 700 global, “low end” incidents, 40 percent of those occurring since the end of the Cold War.³⁰ Today, according to the Marine Corps Small Wars Center of Excellence, there are 75 ongoing “small wars.”³¹

Despite this history, the realization that irregular warfare is not so “irregular” seemed lost on most in DoD in the 1990s, as the American military’s focus continued toward procuring high-tech equipment, developing “information dominance” technologies, and training to fight the next “big one.” The current situations in Afghanistan and Iraq underscore the assertion that the “high end,” conventional fight is the easy fight and the nebulous and amorphous irregular fights have proven to be most difficult and costly, both in terms of lives and money. The closest DoDD 5100.1 comes to addressing this reality is to task *each* service to prepare “forces necessary for the effective prosecution of war and *military operations short of war* (author’s emphasis).”³² The conflicts of the past 40 years seem to indicate that Title 10 requires updating and more

specificity in assigning roles and responsibilities to the services in order to address the breadth of the 21st century security environment.

However, it must be noted that, despite Title 10's narrow focus on conventional missions and the Marine Corps' overall emphasis on corps level operations in the 1990s, the Marine Corps did internalize the lessons of the nation's post-Vietnam small wars and at least attempted to philosophically address the requirements of such conflicts. In the 1990s, the Marine Corps began studying the post-Cold War strategic milieu in earnest and came to the conclusion that irregular warfare merited institutional attention along with conventional warfare. In 1998, then-Commandant General Charles Krulak signed into doctrine Marine Corps Doctrinal Publication (MCDP) 3, *Expeditionary Operations*. In the first chapter, "The Landscape: Chaos in the Littorals", MCDP 3 described the nature of future conflict as follows:

While threats to national security may have decreased in order of magnitude, they have increased in number, frequency, and variety. These lesser threats have proven difficult to ignore. The main point of this discussion is to point out that the post-Cold War geopolitical situation has fundamentally altered the nature and scope of future military conflicts. This situation requires a diverse range of military methods and capabilities for effective response. Far from creating a new world order, the end of the Cold War has led to what former United Nations Secretary-General Perez de Cuellar has described as the 'new anarchy'.³³

The Marine Corps' proposed solution to address this "new anarchy" was to continue investing in its most effective weapon, the individual Marine. As such, the idea of the "strategic corporal" operating in a "three block war" became an operational concept that relied on and reinforced the esprit de corps, training, and warrior culture of the Marine Corps.

Still, the tension between the conventional and irregular ends of the threat spectrum, particularly for a force striving to maintain a general purpose character, proved to be difficult to overcome. Despite MCDP 3's overall emphasis on the "new anarchy," the Marine Corps could not divest itself of a conventional focus. As MCDP 3 goes on to say,

A direct military conflict with a major power is an unlikely event – at least for the foreseeable future – but it would be the conflict most threatening to our national interests and security. It would be the one eventuality that poses a direct threat to national survival, and so we must be prepared to protect against it. Such a conflict could involve, among other things, intense conventional combat with advanced weaponry and large military formations. Such a conflict could be protracted and would likely involve a period of mobilization and deployment of forces.³⁴

Clearly, the higher end conventional focus remained intact as well as the assumption that a general purpose force capable of executing at the high end of the spectrum could execute at the low end equally well. In other words, because the Marine Corps had not been relieved of any of its statutory functions, even in the face of a changing security environment, it was still expected to “do it all.” However, the fact that the Marine Corps overtly recognized the changing nature of the threat was a positive step toward embracing the missions required in the new, emerging security environment. Just as the reformers had done in the 1920s-1930s, the Marine Corps of the 1990s presciently looked into the future and began to refine the definition of *readiness* as it pertained to a changing world. The pre-WWII reformers laid the conceptual foundation for advanced base force and amphibious operations. Now, elements within the Marine Corps developed the conceptual foundation for preparing to engage the rising irregular threats of the new millennium, even though neither Title 10 nor the DoDD 5100.1 tasking captured this as a formal function. Commensurately, the Marine Corps did not pursue the resources and organizational changes needed to fully execute the mission as stated.

One could conclude that the current administration’s emphasis on DoD transformation and the accompanying emphasis on addressing the security challenges resulting from the asymmetric and unconventional threats of the 21st century provided the necessary guidance needed to overcome the shortfalls of current Title 10 legislation. The purpose of the 2006 Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR) was to provide a twenty-year look into the future to

determine “where the Department of Defense currently is and the direction...it needs to go in fulfilling [its] responsibilities to the American people.”³⁵ The QDR signified a fundamental philosophical shift in how the DoD views the security environment by elevating the asymmetric threats to American national security interests (unconventional, disruptive, and catastrophic threats) to the same level as the traditional threats that have dominated defense planning, organization, and procurement efforts since the end of World War II. In order to meet these threats, the 2006 QDR directed a Department of Defense (DoD)-wide shift in mission focus that emphasized an “ability to surge quickly to trouble spots across the globe” with mobile, expeditionary forces that are capable of engaging networked, non-state threats with preventative rather than reactive actions.³⁶ To most Marines, however, the QDR simply reiterated what the Marine Corps was already doing.

And this is the problem. Despite the QDR’s extensive philosophical redirection, it did not resolve the Marine Corps’ dilemma between addressing the prevailing and emerging threat environment (which is fundamentally unconventional in nature) and fulfilling its conventionally oriented Title 10 assigned responsibilities. While the QDR mandated a DoD-wide revision in *mission capacity requirements*, it did not possess the authority to direct a change in the *statutory missions* assigned to the Marine Corps, nor did it direct any significant changes to budget priorities and commitments. As Michele A. Flournoy, a former deputy assistant secretary of defense for strategy, noted,

Perhaps the largest disappointment of the 2006 QDR was its failure to articulate a comprehensive, long-term vision of the capabilities the U.S. military needs for the future and to identify the shifts in investment needed to realize that vision. It did not adequately realign the U.S. defense program and budget with the realities of the new security environment, and it failed to make the necessary connections between stated strategic priorities, capabilities required, and actual programmatic decisions...³⁷

The problem is clearly laid out in the planning guidance of the Marine Corps's new Commandant, General James T. Conway:

Looking ahead to the challenges of the Long War, the Defense Department's 2006 Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR) directed that we enhance counterinsurgency capabilities. Our Marine component to Special Operations Command is part of this commitment. Other types of forces, unique to counterinsurgency operations and much in demand, will also have to be stood up. However, we will maintain robust, contingency response forces *required by law* (my emphasis) to be *'the Nation's shock troops,' always ready – and always capable of forcible entry.*³⁸

Simply put, the 2006 QDR, when combined with the requirements of Title 10, has maintained the Marine Corps in a position where it has to “do it all” amidst an ever-expanding and complicated spectrum of conflict without an appreciable increase in resources.

Why is this significant? As a general purpose force in readiness, why can't the Marine Corps continue doing what it has done since the end of WWII (i.e., be all things to all people)? After all, the Marine Corps has always taken great pride in the ability of its Marines to accomplish any mission regardless of resource constraints. Unfortunately, the reality is that doing more with less has its limits. The Marine Corps' standing functions as “required by law” (functions that were identified prior to WWII) put the Marine Corps into a fiscal and organizational bind with few apparent solutions.

Fiscally, the challenges of “doing it all” are significant to say the least. From a macro perspective, the DoD faces decreases in funding if historical cyclical norms are any indication (see Figure 2). Whereas the DoD had obtained a Fiscal Year (FY) 2006 budget of \$441.6 billion (this does not include the \$70 billion in supplemental funding that was requested on top of \$50 billion that Congress had already approved for the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq),³⁹ it is anticipated that the DoD budget in FY2012 will be reduced to approximately \$350 billion. This constitutes a 21% decrease in overall DoD funding (excluding FY2006 supplemental funding). When one considers competitive domestic budget pressures such as, by 2045, 84 cents of every

federal dollar will have to go to social security unless this program is fiscally addressed today,⁴⁰ it would be naïve to assume that current defense spending levels will be sustainable let alone palatable to the American public.

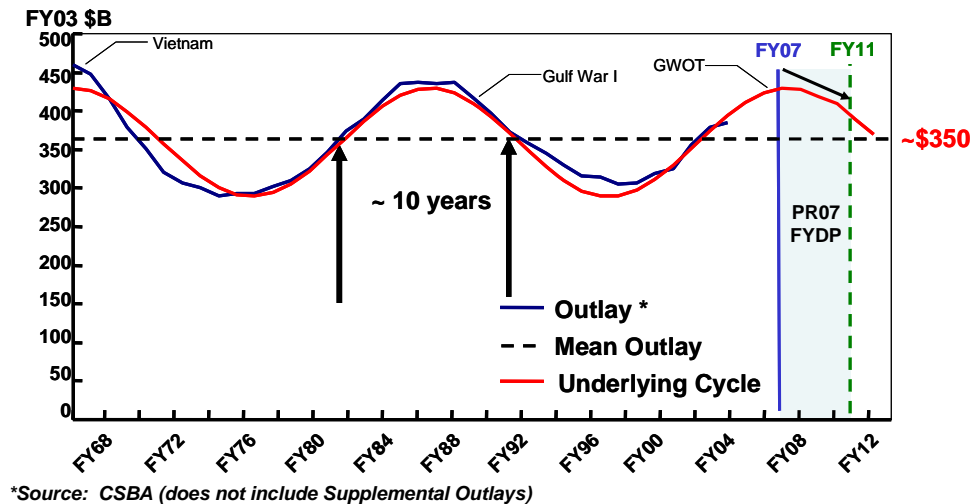


Figure 2. 10-Year Cyclical DoD Budget Outlays⁴¹

What does this mean to the Marine Corps?⁴² In the face of an anticipated overall reduction in DoD funding, the Marine Corps has set some aggressive procurement budget goals. First and foremost is to maintain a single Major Contingency Operation (MCO) MEF based on 21 infantry battalions and possessing a “2 x MEB (Marine Expeditionary Brigade) amphibious forcible entry” capability (which included a two MEB Maritime Prepositioning Force-Future (MPF(F)) capability, a one MEB MPF-legacy, and one MEB shore-based preposition capability). Additionally, the budget is to allow for “a shift toward irregular” warfare by funding such programs as the Center for Advanced Operational Cultural Learning (CAOCL), Foreign Military Training Units (FMTU), and irregular warfare-oriented training exercises such as Mojave Viper and Desert Talon as well as, per the 2006 QDR’s direction, standing up the Marine Special

Operations Command (MARSOC) which will be composed of approximately 2600 Marines. Lastly, the budget is to support modernization in numerous areas such as ground mobility, MAGTF command and control (C2), fires, force protection, intelligence, distributed operations (DO), and science and technology (S&T).

Can the Marine Corps realistically afford such a wide array of requirements? A quick analysis of the progress of the Marine Corps' three major procurement programs indicates that it will be difficult at best. First of all, the Expeditionary Fighting Vehicle (EFV), the replacement vehicle for the aging Amphibious Assault Vehicle (AAV) and a key major end item needed to support two MEBs worth of forcible entry capability, has already been reduced from the original goal of 1013 vehicles to 565 vehicles because it threatened to consume up to 71% of the Marine Corps's FY2013 ground equipment procurement budget and the money was required to fund the Light Armored Vehicle (Personnel) (LAV(P)) upgrade.

Second, the tilt rotor MV-22 Osprey, 36% of the overall Marine Corps FY2013 procurement budget,⁴³ is also clearly needed to replace the vaunted, over-worked, and struggling medium lift CH-46 and CH-53D fleets if any type of medium lift capability is to be maintained. However, the decision has been made to deploy the first MV-22 squadron for combat operations in Iraq in the fall of 2007, in spite of the fact that the primary vendor contract does not and the current industrial capacity cannot materially support the entire MV-22 transition plan in the midst of such a commitment. In order to support the first MV-22 deployment and the follow-on deployment of the next two MV-22 squadrons with parts and trained pilots, the Marine Corps will have to sacrifice the material readiness of its lone MV-22 training squadron as well as deploy the bulk of its limited cadre of MV-22 instructor pilots. Currently, the nascent MV-22 training squadron is experiencing substandard mission readiness rates as the Marine Corps

prepares for the first MV-22 squadron combat deployment. Additionally, a five-year contract to hire civilian instructor pilots to support the MV-22 training squadron is currently under negotiation in order to fill the void in trained instructor pilots resulting from the pending MV-22 squadron deployments.⁴⁴ Obviously, unplanned money will have to be directed toward these issues in order to sustain the nascent MV-22 program.

Third, the Joint Strike Fighter (JSF), the aircraft intended to replace the Marine Corps' AV-8B and F/A-18A/C/D aircraft and 33% of the overall Marine Corps FY2013 procurement budget, has seen its acquisition unit costs increase by 28% (\$23 million per aircraft) over initial estimates, its development costs increase by 84%, and the completion of development slip by five years.⁴⁵ The fact that the expensive technologies incorporated in this airframe are geared more toward deep precision strike interdiction and anti-air warfare missions than combined arms, maneuver warfare type missions (close air support, forward air controller (airborne), armed reconnaissance, etc) raises questions as to whether it was designed to support Marine operations or to compete with the Air Force and Navy for conventional joint missions.

Further complicating matters, the POM-08 Front End Assessment (FEA) highlighted the fact that "significant bills" ranging from barracks renovations to Navy-Marine Corps Intranet (NMCI) implementation have already decremented Marine Corps warfighting investment by as much as 7.6% from the FY2007 budget baseline (a baseline that was already severely decremented). As an example, the implementation of the Marine Corps's Distributed Operations (DO) concept, an initiative focused on enhancing small units so that they are "more autonomous, more lethal, and better able to operate across the full spectrum of operations,"⁴⁶ and arguably the program that is most applicable to the future irregular security environment, is currently underfunded by \$368 million across the Future Years Defense Program (FYDP). Additionally, while

the Marine Corps was able to leverage budget supplements to purchase equipment to fight the ongoing wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, supplements will not cover the future sustainment costs of this new gear. According to the Center for Naval Analysis (CNA), the recurring cost to sustain additional equipment purchased in excess of one-for-one replacement requirements is 6-8% of the equipment procurement cost. Moreover, the additional cost to armor the Marine Corps' vehicle fleet must also be accounted for in POM-08 (the unit cost to improve the HMMWV A2 to the armored M1151/52 variant increases from \$70,000 to \$160,000).

As a result of the increased weight of these armor improvements, an increased requirement for heavy helicopter lift capability also arises, particularly when one considers that the LHA(R) (the planned replacement for several LHA class amphibious assault ships) will not have a well deck for surface movement of vehicles. The CH-53K Heavy Lift Replacement (HLR) helicopter will replace the aged CH-53E but, if the procurement timelines and budget excesses of the MV-22 and JSF are any indication, it will take some time and significant funding to bring that program to fruition.

Lastly, the cost to "reset the force" (i.e., repair or replace equipment used in the current fights in Afghanistan and Iraq) is presently set at \$13.9 billion.⁴⁷ Future budgets will also have to address this added requirement if future capabilities are to be maintained.⁴⁸ Overall, it is doubtful that the nation can afford a Marine Corps designed to "do it all," particularly when "doing it all" is more oriented on the specter of past threats and not the reality of the future security environment.

In the face of these budgetary challenges, perhaps the most significant impact of preserving the "do it all" focus the Marine Corps has maintained over the past thirty years will be organizational and cultural. According to the Marine Corps' Front End Assessment, the net

result of “doing it all” will be the polarization of the Marine Corps, where half of the force will be MEF-based principally focused on “traditional” missions (and weighted by a “traditionally focused” reserve component) while the other half of the force will be oriented on the irregular environment.⁴⁹

Is this where the Marine Corps wants to go in the future? Arguably, no. To begin with, dividing the Marine Corps into two separate camps oriented on different ends of the threat spectrum would dilute the Marine Corps’ ability, flexibility, and capacity to adequately address *any* threat along that spectrum. In other words, the Marine Corps is forced to reduce its *capacities* in almost all warfighting areas so that it can afford a wide array of *capabilities* (the most expensive of which are high-tech equipment sets primarily focused on conventional warfare). More specifically, an attempt to maintain a spectrum-wide capability may in fact leave the Marine Corps *less ready* to serve American national security needs simply because its resources will be stretched so thin that it has no depth to address threats on a sustained basis. Clearly, Frederick the Great’s maxim that “He who defends everything, defends nothing” has application in this regard.

Moreover, without a doubt, the enduring strength of the Marine Corps has been the individual Marine. The esprit de corps, training, image, and ethos of “every Marine a rifleman” has proven its worth for generations. However, adopting two separate mission focuses runs the risk of culturally fragmenting the Marine Corps. The idea that the Marine Corps should produce “conventional” Marines, “irregular” Marines, and, now that MARSOC is a reality, “special operations” Marines is anathema to the cultural essence of the Marine Corps. To risk interrupting the homogeneous nature of what it means to be a Marine would risk undermining the Marine Corps’ primary source of strength and “readiness.” In today’s – and tomorrow’s –

asymmetric world of non-state actors, failed states, terrorist organizations, drug lord run narco-states, and increased piracy, a singularly focused Marine Corps is needed more than ever before. It's not the equipment that the Marine Corps buys that will make it ready for the 21st century; it's how and where it chooses to employ its human capital. Where and how to employ this human capital is the discussion of the following chapters.

Chapter 3

Ready For What? Where is the Fight and Who is the Threat?

The face of the primary threats to the Marine Corps is changing and the Marines must change with it.⁵⁰

The U.S. military must develop agile strategies and adaptive tactics to succeed in the 21st century threat environment...Building on their expeditionary skills, U.S. Marines must increase their capacity for decentralized, nonlinear operations in contested zones, including the littoral and complex urban terrain.⁵¹

For the Marine Corps, the answer to the above questions is as culturally imperative as it is simple: Be ready for what the nation is least ready to face. *Readiness* has been the fundamental *purpose* of the Marine Corps since John A. Lejeune identified it as the Marines' *raison d'être* in 1920. And readiness can only be defined in the context of the prevailing security environment. Today, the United States is fully prepared to fight a conventional, high-tech war against an equally conventional foe. Unfortunately, American national interests within the context of today's and, more importantly, tomorrow's security environment are not challenged by conventional threats. The fact is that irregular threats pose the greatest danger to American national interests and it is in this area that America's military capabilities are most lacking. As such, the Marine Corps, as "the nation's force in readiness," must holistically reorient itself toward this end.

In order to determine what is to be done, one must first understand the environment in which one operates. As Figures 3 and 4 indicate, areas where recent amphibious operations occurred look remarkably similar to predicted areas of future conflict.

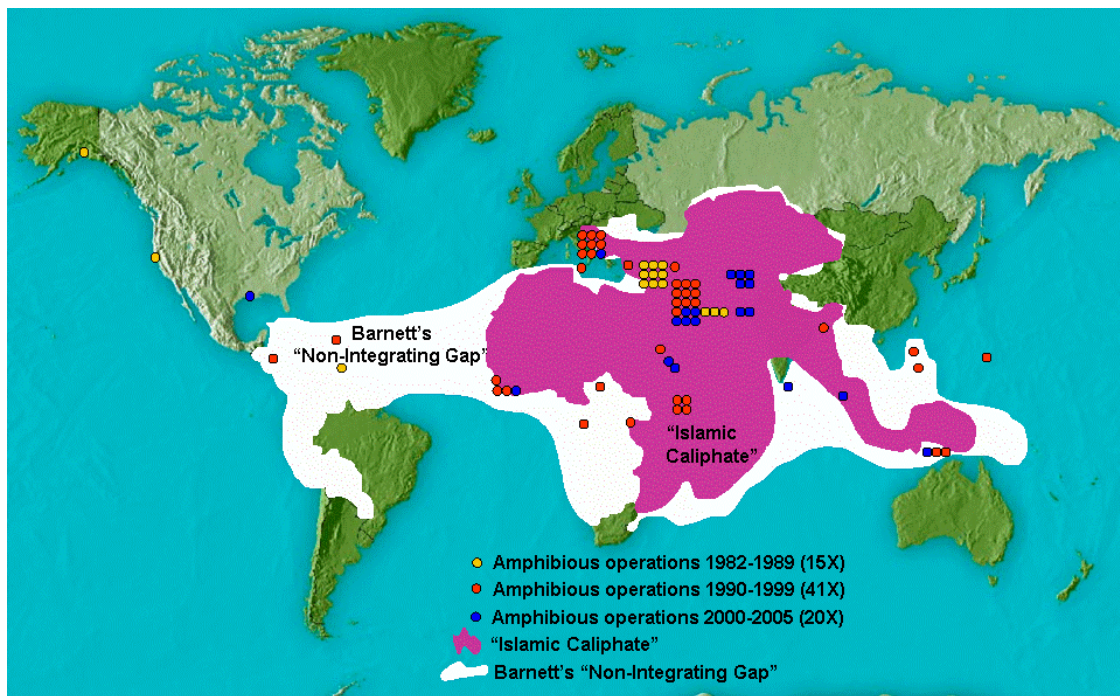


Figure 3. Operations of U.S. Amphibious Forces, 1982-2005⁵²

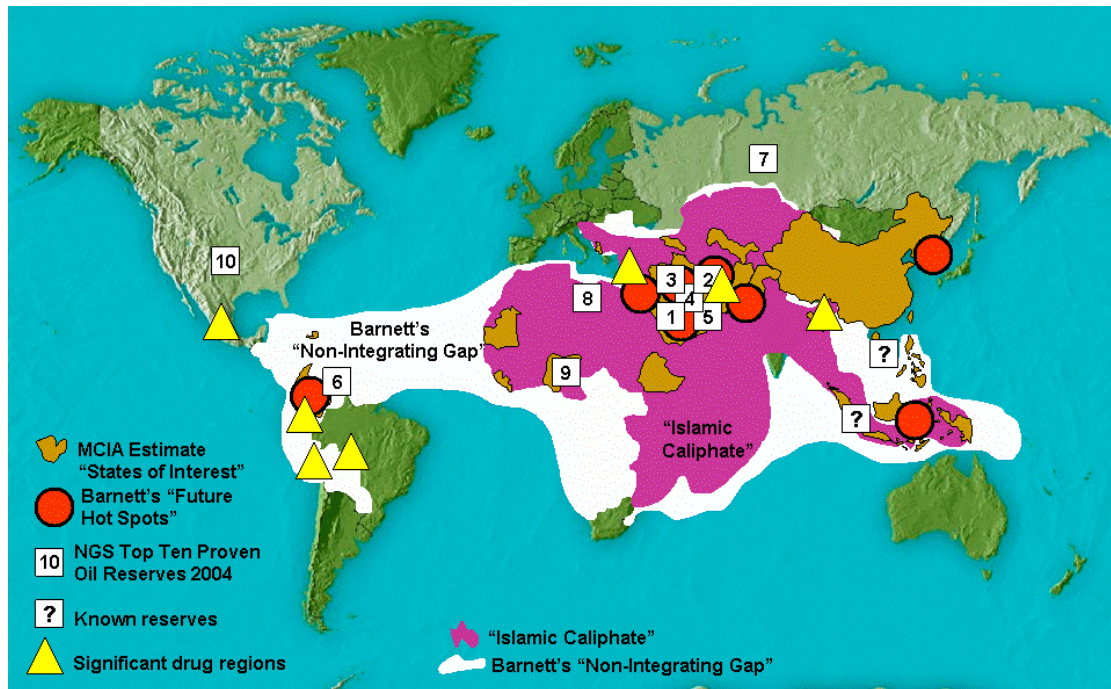


Figure 4. Potential Sources of Conflict⁵³

It is important to note that the preponderance of past conflicts have been irregular in nature and, as Figures 3 and 4 indicate, these conflicts have mostly occurred in the underdeveloped *littoral* nations of Africa, the Middle East, the Indo-Pacific rim, and Central and South America. These regions are where 75 percent of the world's population lives, 80 percent of the world's capital cities lay, and around which 80 percent of the world's trade travels.⁵⁴ Looking into the future, it is estimated that by 2015 the world population will grow to 7.2 billion people, with 95 percent of this growth occurring in the developing, already overpopulated, and mostly urban and littoral regions of the world. The net impact of this demographic phenomenon will be a disproportionate youth population (i.e., "the youth bulge" made up of 15-29 year olds) that has been and will continue to be the primary source of regional instability. As the Marine Corps Midrange Threat Estimate 2005 – 2015 predicts,

This anomaly may cause instability as large populations of restless, dissatisfied young people are confronted with economic stagnation and unwelcome social change. Members

of this demographic tend to be highly politicized, outspoken, and motivated by perceived social, economic, and political injustices.⁵⁵

The combination of this volatile youth population explosion and the prevailing conditions of inadequate governance, overwhelming poverty, religious and ethnic strife, resource competition (most notably fresh water, minerals, and oil), and rampant diseases will establish the ideal conditions for civil war, terrorism, drug trafficking, piracy, weapons of mass destruction (WMD) proliferation, and genocide. Left unchecked, these inevitable sources of regional instability will have global effects.

These effects impact American national interests in several ways. First, while often maligned by realists, the fact is that human suffering resulting from civil war, poverty, disease, ethnic cleansing, human rights violations, and poor governance resonates within the American psyche. Just consider the United States' public reactions to the situations in Somalia, Rwanda, Burundi, the Darfur region of Sudan, the Balkans, East Timor, and Haiti. America will find it increasingly difficult to ignore the plights of nations such as Angola, where one out of three children dies before reaching the age of 5, the average life expectancy is 38, and 1.6 million people are either displaced or in refugee status (Angola ranks 160th out of 177 countries on the United Nation's Human Development Index);⁵⁶ or the Congo, where for every combat related death that occurs, an additional 62 non-combat deaths result from the conflict environment;⁵⁷ or Haiti, where endemic political instability endures due to the fact that 75 percent of its population lives on less than two U.S. dollars a day and 86 percent of its urban population lives in slums.⁵⁸ These are but a few examples of the enormous socio-economic problems that portend future crises that the U.S. public will feel obligated to address even though American involvement may be based more on emotional reactions than material concerns.

Second, domestic security concerns dictate that the United States preempt threats abroad in order to negate attacks on American soil. Obviously, this includes partnering with longstanding overseas allies as well as training and operating with burgeoning allies throughout the Middle East, Central Asia, and Africa as a means to engage global terror networks. This also includes increased efforts to engage narco-crime syndicate threats such as the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Columbia (FARC), which is largely responsible for Columbia providing 90 percent of the cocaine sold in the U.S.⁵⁹ Organizations such as FARC, allegedly backed by nations such as Venezuela, threaten the stability of many fledgling democracies already challenged by endemic corruption and income disparity amongst the general populace. In fact, Columbia has been fighting a civil war primarily against the FARC for nearly 40 years. Moreover, gangs such as Mara Salvatrucha -13 (MS-13) that boasts a membership of over 100,000 and operates with impunity across Central America, Mexico, and even the United States, pose a significant threat in that they are becoming more organized, violent, and influential in regions that have little economic opportunities or hope.⁶⁰

Third, the unstable regions of the world affect American national interests due to the requirement to protect American citizens around the globe. A major trend of 21st century globalization is an increasing number of American citizens choosing to live abroad. Currently, the United States State Department (DoS) estimates that 3.2 million Americans live abroad, an increase of more than one million citizens since the 1990s. Additionally, an estimated 250,000 to 300,000 Americans will continue to move abroad each year for the foreseeable future.⁶¹ While many of these Americans are located in relatively stable regions of the world (e.g., Europe, Japan, and China), a significant and growing number reside in the mostly littoral “arc of instability” simply because this is where some of the greatest economic opportunities can be

found. As such, these Americans provide an ever-expanding list of targets of opportunity for terrorists, pirates, kidnappers, and malcontented populaces. Obviously, providing personal security to all citizens abroad is beyond the pale of reason. However, the requirement to conduct Noncombatant Evacuation Operations (NEOs), secure industrial and investment capital, and enact retribution upon nefarious anti-American actors is likely to increase as American citizens increase their global presence.

Finally, American economic requirements dictate the threat environment in which the United States will be most likely find itself. Ongoing American economic interests in regions such as Africa and Latin America require the United States military to protect “the commons” and engage the regional and largely irregular threats simply because political stability within these regions is essential for access to natural resources. In the case of Africa, America presently imports 15 percent of its oil from countries such as Angola, Nigeria, and increasingly from the Congo Republic.⁶² However, all three of these countries made the Marine Corps’ Center for Emerging Threats and Opportunities, (CETO) “Ten Nations Most at Risk of Conflict” list.⁶³ As such, the United States has a vested interest in developing and supporting sound governance, professional militaries, and infrastructure capacities within these countries as a means of securing *long-term* access to their natural resources.

Of particular importance is the requirement to secure the world’s primary sea lines of communication (SLOCs), a task that promises to become increasingly difficult. 95 percent of the United States’ imports and exports outside North America are transferred by commercial shipping, a volume that is expected to double by 2020.⁶⁴ Unfortunately, many key SLOC chokepoints are collocated in volatile regions rife with political, economic, and religious instability. Key SLOCs such as the Straits of Hormuz, the Bab el Mandeb Straits linking the Red

Sea to the Gulf of Aden, and most significantly, the key waterways lying within the Indonesian archipelago are examples of such critical chokepoints. Using Indonesia as an example, the following examination illustrates the enormous security challenges and potential economic impact that irregular threats pose in and around the world's key SLOC chokepoints.

Indonesia contains the three most critical economic SLOC chokepoints for not only the United States but also the entire world. Over half the world's seaborne trade passes through the Straits of Malacca, Sunda, and Lombok. This equates to more than three times the traffic of the Suez Canal and over five times the traffic that passes through the Panama Canal.⁶⁵

Surrounding these vital economic chokepoints is a nation with a nascent and yet unproven democratic government that faces significant security challenges. The basic geography and demographics of Indonesia hinder the government's efforts to provide essential services and security. Indonesia spans over 3,200 miles and contains over 17,500 islands that hold the fourth largest population in the world (not to mention the largest Muslim population in the world). Additionally, Indonesia contains over 300 ethnic groups speaking over 250 different languages. Most significantly, the province, island, and/or ethnic group to which an Indonesian belongs determines his/her economic, political, and social position as seen by the fact that some provinces have average incomes 12 times higher than others. Life expectancy can vary by 13 years from one island to the next and 30 percent of the workforce is underemployed (a figure that will continue to increase with 2 million young Indonesians entering the workforce each year).⁶⁶ These polarizing conditions continue to contribute to an unstable society of the "haves" and the "have nots."

The net result of these conditions has been to make Indonesia an ideal breeding ground for terrorism and piracy. From most accounts, Al Qaeda, among numerous other groups, has

been active throughout Southeast Asia since 1988. Leveraging the social, economic, political, and religious tensions within Indonesia, the Philippines, Malaysia, Thailand, and Singapore, Al Qaeda has been able to foster and influence numerous terrorist and criminal organizations within the region. Most notable of these groups is Jemmah Islamiyah (JI), an Indonesian-based organization that has flourished into “a pan-Asian network extending from Malaysia to Japan in the north and Australia in the south.”⁶⁷ Using Indonesia’s numerous uninhabited and ungoverned islands with their surrounding unpatrolled waters, these groups have been able to establish base camps, training facilities, law-enforcement refuges, and recruitment centers. In 2003, it was estimated that there were over 2,000 illegal television and radio stations scattered throughout Indonesia⁶⁸ from which terrorist and piracy operations can be coordinated with virtual impunity. As a result, in the past decade the incidence of piracy and maritime terrorist attacks has increased threefold,⁶⁹ with over a third occurring in the 630 mile-long Strait of Malacca alone.⁷⁰

The impact of these maritime attacks cannot be underestimated.

Trade and commerce cannot flourish where there is no confidence in the security environment within which it must operate. A good example of this is the attack on the *Limburg* (author’s note: the *Limburg* was a French tanker hit by a suicide attack off the coast of Yemen in 2002), which although it was only an attack on a single vessel, had a profound economic impact on the Yemeni maritime industry. Immediately following the attack, underwriters tripled insurance premiums for vessels calling on Yemeni ports. These premiums led some lines to cut Yemen from their schedules and/or switch to ports in neighboring countries. Yemeni terminals saw throughput plummet. Local sources claim as many as 3000 people lost their employment and government-estimated losses stemming from the attack are USD 15 million per month.⁷¹

Clearly, the economic impact of such events was not lost on the numerous terrorist organizations operating throughout the world, most notably Al Qaeda. In the face of increased security in more traditional terrorist target sets (airlines, embassies, etc), Al Qaeda has openly stated that it intends to focus its global efforts on “softer” yet equally effective targets,

We, the fighters of the holy war, in general are hoping to enter the next phase...It will be a war of killings, *a war against businesses*, which will hit the enemy where he does not expect us to.⁷²

The fact that a critical global economic lifeline transits through maritime regions ideally suited to the needs and goals of groups such as Al Qaeda obviously underscores the need for a maritime response force today in order to avoid a global disaster tomorrow. As the world's major military and economic power, the United States has a vested interest in the security and protection of the maritime "commons" not only for its own national interests but also for the benefit of the global economy. The Marine Corps seems well suited to fit this bill.

The discussion up to this point has focused exclusively on irregular threats. That is not to suggest that conventional threats are not an issue of concern, nor is it a suggestion that the United States should give up its advantage in this regard. However, it is the contention of this paper that the United States has over-prepared for the conventional threats it is likely *not* to face in the future while ignoring the irregular threats that constitute the greatest threat to American national security interests. The three conventional threats that are most often invoked to justify a continued emphasis on high-tech, linear, and mechanized warfare are Korea, Iran, and China. However, even a cursory analysis of each of these threats indicates that an impending conflict with any is rather unlikely.

In the case of North Korea, the United States presence on the Korean peninsula has become increasingly unnecessary and, more importantly, destabilizing. American presence in Korea, ostensibly to provide the bulwark against an attack from the north against the Republic of Korea to south, is an anachronistic holdover from the Cold War. Not only does it represent the last vestige of the Cold War in the form of an ideologically divided country, it also represents the last vestige of western colonialism in Asia that was marked by unequal treaties that leveraged

Asian (specifically Chinese) weaknesses. Marine Corps Intelligence Activity (MCIA) analyst Daniel Marquis is correct in observing,

The Cold War approach of United States policy remains in effect in the Koreas despite the end of the Cold War for over a decade. Even normalization with both Russia and China, the kingpins of the Cold War enemy bloc, has not significantly altered the current situation in the Korean Peninsula... But despite having twice the population and an economy of nearly eighteen times the size of that of North Korea, South Korea continues to subsidize its defense by reliance upon the US in troop commitments, acquisition of US military hardware, and defense technology transfers associated with equipment purchases and development of an indigenous military-industrial production base. South Korea maintains its ever-increasing qualitative edge against the North with only 2.7 percent of its 2003 GDP devoted to military spending in contrast to the North's expenditure of 22.9 percent of GDP. Clearly capable, but not necessarily willing, South Korea can easily provide for its own defense. In terms of the defense only of South Korea, the US military contribution is without doubt overkill and unnecessary.⁷³

Moreover, American presence on the Korean Peninsula gives legitimacy to the paranoid and isolationist Kim Jung Il regime. Absent American physical presence, international and domestic justification for North Korean military expenditures, illicit activities, and abrasive diplomatic posture would become increasingly difficult to sell. Simply stated, after fifty years of American assistance and support, the Republic of Korea is well postured to defend itself against a North Korea that has become progressively more anemic since the end of the Korean War.

Finally, the North Korean military is in no position to mount offensive operations. Whether one looks at North Korean equipment and personnel readiness rates or the fact that the North Korean forces have tied themselves to static, defensive positions such as underground facilities, the ability of North Korea to unify the Korean Peninsula by force is simply non-existent, let alone politically feasible. The time has come for America to disengage and allow the two Koreas to take the next step toward unification.

A conventional conflict with Iran is also unlikely to occur. Iran is a country besieged. Externally, the United States is strongly positioned around Iran by its presence on the Arabian

Peninsula, Afghanistan, and Pakistan. Moreover, Iran witnessed the rapid collapse of two neighboring regimes (the Taliban in Afghanistan and Saddam Hussein in Iraq) at the hands of American military might and fears that it may be next. One fact is not lost on the Iranians: Iran fought an eight year war with neighboring Iraq that ended in a stalemate while the United States traveled half way around the world and drove to Baghdad in a month.

Internally, the radical clerical regime in Iran is under tremendous pressure. Iranians continue to call for economic and social reforms. By 2007, 52 percent of those aged 15-29 could be unemployed. Additionally, inflation currently stands at 17 percent and continues to rise faster than wages and necessities such as bread and potatoes must be heavily subsidized in order to sustain the general populace. As the *MCIA Marine Corps Midrange Threat Estimate 2005-2015* points out, maintaining regime legitimacy is becoming more and more difficult,

It remains to be seen how long a small group of aging clerics can impose its will for a radical state on a predominantly educated society where 70 percent of the population has no memory of the 1979 revolution.⁷⁴

Combined with the ever-increasing undercurrent of support for Western ideals stemming from exposure to global communications such as television and internet access, Iran's lackluster social and economic conditions have led western diplomats to estimate that only 15 percent of Iranians support the established regime.⁷⁵ Given these conditions, it would be strategically counterproductive to engage Iran with conventional military power. Such an action would only serve to galvanize popular support behind an unpopular regime. America would be better served leveraging its diplomatic and economic might against the Iranian regime and focus its military power on counter-proliferation and anti-terrorism activities.

Most importantly, despite the concerns of many within the DoD, a conventional conflict with China is *not* inevitable. *In fact, it is highly unlikely.* To begin with, where would the fight

occur? The United States does not have the capacity or the will to engage the Chinese masses on mainland China. By the same token, China does not have (nor will it have in the foreseeable future) the ability to project the combat power required to seize Taiwan, let alone to engage the United States anywhere else in the world such as the Spratly Islands or Africa. In other words, a large set piece conflict between the United States and China is simply not feasible.

Second, why would the Chinese choose to fight a large and costly war with the United States? A careful analysis of Chinese military actions since the establishment of the Peoples' Republic of China (PRC) yields one basic conclusion about Chinese strategic culture that has clear applicability to the 21st century security environment: China only engages in military action after careful analysis concludes that China's *strategic* position will be improved as a result of armed conflict.⁷⁶ Today, China clearly understands that an armed conflict with the United States would seriously derail China's improving geopolitical situation. Whereas in the 1960s China found itself politically and economically isolated and surrounded by hostile nations (India to the southwest, the Soviet Union to the north, and United States to the south and east in Taiwan, Southeast Asia, South Korea, and Japan), China now enjoys greater economic and diplomatic ties and influence throughout Asia, Africa, and the Americas as a result of its phenomenal economic growth within the global market. Most significantly, China's efforts to forge a close economic relationship with Taiwan as a means to unify the island with mainland China have proven effective and productive. Presently, Taiwan exports more goods to China than anywhere else in the world and this trend is likely to continue. Huge numbers of Taiwanese live and work in China, Taiwanese companies have invested over US\$100 billion in mainland China projects, and two-way trade grew to US\$61 billion last year.⁷⁷ Why would China invade Taiwan to achieve its "One China" policy when globalization and economic interdependence are

achieving the same result in a mutually beneficial way? Overall, China is achieving its global strategic objectives without using military force. It is doubtful that it will change course any time soon.

Finally, while a large scale war with China is highly unlikely, competition for global resources *is* inevitable. For example, China has invested aggressively in Africa in order to gain access to its natural resource market (oil, timber, minerals, cotton, etc). According to International Monetary Fund (IMF) predictions, Chinese trade with Africa will exceed \$50 billion this year and could reach \$100 billion by 2010, an investment that has largely propelled sub-Saharan Africa's increased growth rate from 3 percent to 5.8 percent over the past five years. While these numbers sound positive, the fact of the matter is that little of this growth has trickled down to the masses.⁷⁸ Unlike the IMF or western governments, China does not attach conditions such as improvements in human rights or political institutions to its foreign investments. As a result, only the elite of Africa are reaping the benefits of Africa's natural resources, which further fuels political instability and the socio-economic tensions between the "haves" and "have nots."

In this light, Chinese policies in developing regions such as sub-Saharan Africa smack of 20th century western imperialism. As such, they could be inadvertently inflaming an already volatile situation made of social unrest, terrorism, and civil war as well as setting themselves up to be the next target of regional discord. The United States should view this as an opportunity.

As *New York Times* columnist James Traub notes,

If we believe that a model of development that strengthens the hand of authoritarian leaders and does little, if anything, to empower the poor is a bad long-term strategy for Africa, then we are going to have to come up with a strategic partnership of our own. And it is not only a question of what is good for the African people. The United States has a real security interest in avoiding failed states and in blocking the spread of terrorism in...Africa.⁷⁹

In other words, a strategic partnership with Africa fostered by a balanced mix of political, economic, and military resources and focused on those areas where American economic and security interests *truly* lay may be the most effective way to counter Chinese global competition.

The point of this chapter is to illustrate that the 21st century threats to United States are not the threats that the United States spent the second half of the 20th century preparing for (i.e., a high-tech, mirror-imaged, conventional threat). This paradigm shift has proven difficult to digest. Paraphrasing Thomas Barnett, we have spent so much time thinking and preparing to fight a mirror-imaged foe strictly within the context of the war itself that we have not considered how we would, and should, fight within the context of the global social, economic, and political environment.⁸⁰ As a result, it is culturally hard to divest of our “comfort zone” because of the fear that past visions of long-standing enemies may reemerge.

However, the realities of the global environment cannot be ignored. The fact that American national (mostly economic) interests overlap some of the most volatile and unstable regions of the world clearly indicates that the nation needs a flexible rapid response force to provide security within “the commons.” Since these commons are mostly found in and around the global littorals, it also seems clear that the Marine Corps is the force of choice to deliver this security. If *readiness* is the preeminent *purpose* of the Marine Corps, should not the Marine Corps accept the task of preparing for what the nation is least ready – and most likely – to face?

Chapter 4

What is to be Done?

As long as the insurgent has failed to build a powerful regular army, the counterinsurgent has little use for heavy sophisticated forces designed for conventional warfare. For his ground forces, he needs infantry and more infantry, highly mobile and lightly armed; some field artillery for occasional support; armored cavalry...for road surveillance and patrolling. For his air force, he wants ground support and observation planes of slow speed, high endurance, great firepower, protected against small-arms ground fire; plus short-takeoff transport planes and helicopters, which play a vital role in counterinsurgency operations.

David Galula, *Counterinsurgency Warfare: Theory and Practice*⁸¹

In order to determine what changes must be made, the Marine Corps must first recognize what its primary role should be in protecting American national interests against the security challenges of the 21st century. Instability and insecurity will be byproducts of economic, political, social, religious, and ethnic tensions between nation-states and non-state entities around the planet. This reality points to an increasing need for a force capable of providing and exporting security.

The ability to export security rapidly to a variety of environments simultaneously throughout the world is something for which the Marine Corps is best suited. The Marine Corps' naval character, expeditionary culture, and disciplined martial spirit provide the rapid deployability and operational flexibility needed to address the largely irregular threats that challenge global security on a daily basis. As such, the Marine Corps can be a key instrument of

national power needed to maintain access to global resources, protect U.S. national interests around the world, and influence global events. In order to be effective in this regard, however, the Marine Corps must enhance its capabilities and capacities to engage in, prevent, and persistently deal with the daily realities of the 21st century security environment.

What is required to be *ready* in the 21st century is a philosophical commitment to developing an organization that recognizes the primacy of people, then ideas, then organizations, and lastly equipment. Technology and conventional force constructs have limited applicability against networked irregular threats. The current Marine Corps is out of balance in this regard and remains too narrowly focused on what a land army should do. In other words, the Marine Corps is simply too heavy and too focused on mechanized and armor maneuver, firepower, and technology as per Colonel Thomas Hammes' definition of Third Generation Warfare (3GW). This focus in turn clouds the ability to think differently and clearly about what the future holds. The Marine Corps must move away from its traditional organization and build a force that employs smaller, lighter organizations with a variety of skill sets designed to rapidly and effectively respond to the irregular challenges of the future while retaining an ability to *contribute* in a major contingency operation (MCO) fight.

To some, focusing the Marine Corps on irregular threats would place key Marine Corps capabilities such as Marine fixed wing aviation, artillery, or armor at risk of dissolution. This assumes that such capabilities are not required in an irregular fight. This, however, is not the case. As in all forms of warfare, irregular warfare still requires force and violence as means to impose political will on the nation's enemies despite the fact that potential adversaries may take the form of pirates, drug lords, terrorists, and insurgents. With the growing sophistication of such threats in terms of weapons, tactics, and command and control processes and technologies,

the fact remains that, for those Marines engaged in kinetic combat, it may be difficult to distinguish between irregular and traditional forms of warfare. As such, the requirement to maintain the capability to plan and execute sustained combined arms operations with fully capable and resourced MAGTFs will continue to exist.

If this is the case, why does the Marine Corps need to change? The fact of the matter is that “fighting” future wars requires forces with capabilities that extend beyond traditional skill sets that are primarily focused on conventional warfare. The following recommendations are offered as a roadmap to developing a “balanced” Marine Corps that will be able to address the predominately irregular threats of tomorrow while maintaining an appropriate capability to contribute to a MCO.⁸²

Organize realistically according to available resources.

The Marine Corps simply does not have the force structure to maintain three divisions, three air wings, and three supporting logistics organizations. As such, one division, one air wing, and one MLG headquarters should be deactivated in order to address this reality. In determining which headquarters should be deactivated, the logical choices are 3rd Marine Division (MarDiv), 3rd MLG, and 1st Marine Aircraft Wing (MAW) currently located in the Western Pacific under III Marine Expeditionary Force (MEF) in Okinawa. This makes sense for several reasons.

First, the relatively few number of subordinate regiments and air groups resident in the Western Pacific negates the requirement for intermediate command structures for III MEF to command and control subordinate unit activities. In the past, the primary function of the division, air wing, and MLG headquarters was to provide command and control in support of standing theater MCO operational plans (OPLANs). As was discussed in Chapter 2, the

likelihood that these OPLANs will be executed is minimal and this is an area that the Marine Corps can assume operational risk. Moreover, a flattened and streamlined command structure will facilitate III MEF's ability to command and control dispersed units countering irregular threats across the expanses of the Pacific Command's (PACOM) area of responsibility (AOR).

Second, as III MEF undergoes its current basing reorganization (i.e., the movement of units from Okinawa to Guam), the deactivation of large major subordinate command (MSC) headquarters will reduce infrastructure requirements in a region that has extremely limited capacity. As such, limited infrastructure resources can be committed to supporting units needed to conduct operations throughout the AOR.

Reorganize Marine operating forces to address the irregular threats of the 21st century security environment.

Each element of the MAGTF – the Command Element (CE), the Ground Combat Element (GCE), the Aviation Combat Element (ACE), and the Logistics Combat Element (LCE) – must reorganize in order to shift the balance of Marine operating forces from conventional warfare to irregular warfare.

The MEF Command Element

Due to the diverse dimensions of 4GW, the MEF CE must increase its ability to execute Information Operations (IO) in order to address the unique political, economic, and social requirements that it will encounter in its assigned area of operations (AO) on a daily basis. In order to do this, each MEF CE requires a standing IO organization, a MEF Area Operations Group (MAOG) that can plan and coordinate combined Marine and interagency activities in order to synchronize these efforts in time, space, and purpose across the MEF's AO. These

activities include advisory, liaison, civil affairs, psychological, and Air and Naval Gunfire Liaison Company (ANGLICO) operations. As such, the MAOG would provide enhanced Information Operations (IO) capabilities to the MEF commander as well as a ready nucleus for standing up the MEF CE as a Joint Interagency Task Force (JIATF) headquarters.

Organizationally, the MAOG would be commanded by a colonel and composed of a headquarters company, an advisory and liaison company, a civil affairs company, a psychological operations company, and an ANGLICO company (see Figure 5).

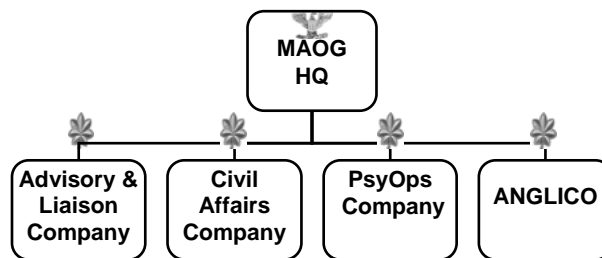


Figure 5. MAOG Organization

Functionally, the MAOG centralizes the MEF's IO planning, integration and analysis support. As such, it serves as an IO hub, linking planners and executors, ensuring consistency in IO objectives, themes and messages. Essentially, the MAOG will enhance the MEF commander's ability to shape the battlespace by supporting military and interagency operations throughout the MEF's AO throughout all phases of operations (Phases 0 through V).

The MAOG headquarters (see Figure 6) would provide a concentration of staff personnel who have expertise in IO planning, IO targeting, Electronic Warfare (EW), and Special Technical Operations (STO) as well as the responsibility to coordinate the efforts of the MAOG's functional companies. As required during combat operations, the MAOG headquarters would also provide the nucleus an Information Operations Coordination Center (IOCC) which would be imbedded within the MEF's Current Operation Center. Additionally, the IOCC would

be augmented by appropriate representation from other IO capable units such as Radio Battalion, Marine electronic warfare squadron (VMAQ), and joint asset representatives as required and/or available. The IOCC would also coordinate with the MEF G-2, G-3 Fires, Public Affairs staff sections to ensure all MAOG efforts are integrated, coordinated, and relevant to ongoing MEF operations. Essentially, it is from the IOCC that the MEF commander “fights” his IO battle.

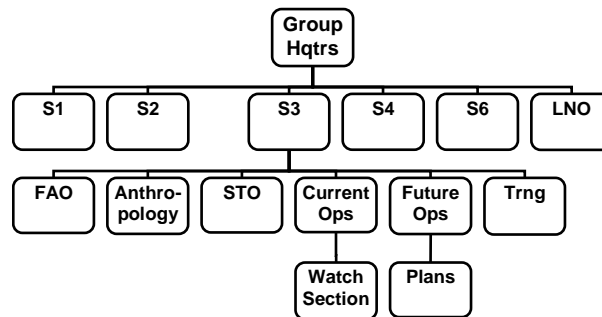


Figure 6. MAOG Headquarters Organization

As Figure 6 also indicates, the MAOG headquarters additionally possesses the MEF’s cultural and regional expertise. Along with a cadre of military Foreign Area Officers (FAO) and two civilian anthropologists, the MAOG headquarters would possess Liaison Officer section that would not only provide MEF IO liaison officers to higher, adjacent, coalition, and interagency headquarters during planning and execution, it would also serve as a repository for external military and civilian agency liaisons and experts needed for the planning and execution of MEF operations. This type of standing regional expertise and organizational connectivity are essential to adequately address the vast array of issues and nuances that will be present in the 21st century security environment.

The functional companies also provide key capabilities needed to enhance the MEF CE’s ability to engage the threat environment of the future. The Advisory & Liaison Company

supports Theater Security Cooperation (TSC) objectives of Combatant Commanders (COCOMs) by providing tailored basic military skills training and advisory support for foreign military forces. The Advisory & Liaison Company, composed of 12 teams (11 Marines per team) would possess mixed skill sets to train and professionalize foreign military forces. These teams could augment battalion-sized operations or serve as stand-alone units focused on person-to-person, small-unit interaction.

The Civil Affairs (CA) and Psychological Operations (PsyOps) companies would provide active component (AC) forces that are organized, trained and equipped to conduct specialized operational activities to prosecute the “Long War” without relying on presidential call-up of specific reserve component units and personnel as is currently the case. To aid CA planning, the CA Company is structured to provide CA planning/SME expertise throughout the MEF for phase 0 through V operations. The CA company should consist of four direct support (DS) platoons dedicated to support four regiments. Overall, this equates to twelve DS CA Teams (8 Marines per team). This PsyOps company will provide organic tactical psychological operations planning, coordination, and execution capabilities that are currently not organic to the MEF. The PsyOps company should be organized into four DS platoons possessing twelve DS PsyOps Teams (8 Marines per team) for employment throughout the MEF. Additionally, each platoon will have the capability to provide high volume printing and loudspeaker/broadcast operations.

The ANGLICO company will provide the liaison assets and foreign area expertise to plan, coordinate, and execute fire support and terminal control in support of Marine, joint, and coalition operations. Moreover, its location within the MAOG would permit the cross-attachment of various MAOG assets (specifically CA and PsyOps assets) to support specific missions.

The Ground Combat Element (GCE)

In order to fight in the irregular environment of the 21st century, the GCE must (1) have more infantry battalions to address the increased demand for “boots on deck” and (2) reorganize to move away from a traditional mechanized force construct and become a lighter, more mobile, small-unit oriented force.

At a minimum, the Marine Corps must increase its number of infantry battalions from 24 to 27 to adequately meet COCOM requirements.⁸³ To begin with, if infantry units are to be effective in the future threat environment, they must train to a wider range of capability sets. These sets range from small unit tactics (e.g., Distributed Operations) to regional culture skills to civil affairs. In order to adequately train to this broad spectrum of requirements, more time must be invested to prepare infantry units than was historically required for conventional type missions. Therefore, the Marine Corps needs to deploy infantry battalions on a 1:3 ratio. This means infantry battalions should be deployed for six months and eighteen months should be reserved for unit recovery and training time. To meet current Marine Expeditionary Unit (MEU) and Unit Deployment Program (UDP) requirements alone, a 1:3 deployment ratio necessitates 24 infantry battalions (twelve battalions to support three MEUs and twelve battalions to support three UDP battalions).⁸⁴ More specifically, as Figure 7 shows, it takes four battalions to support either a single MEU or a UDP requirement at a 1:3 deployment ratio.

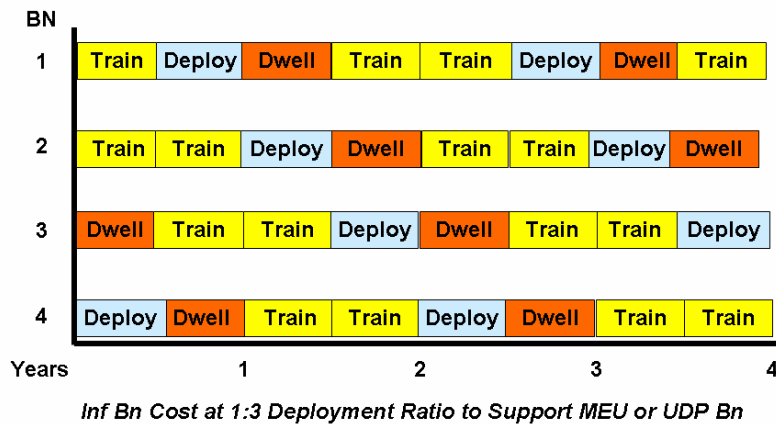


Figure 7. Infantry Battalion Deployment Requirements

In addition to supporting these standing requirements, the Marine Corps needs three additional battalions (for a total of 27 infantry battalions) to address the increased Combatant Commander (COCOM) demand for infantry type units at a continuous 1:3 deployment ratio. Along with the traditional MEU and UDP requirements, the Marine Corps will be increasingly tasked by regional COCOMs to fulfill theater security cooperation (TSC) and crisis response missions throughout the world. Specifically, Marine units can expect to receive increased tasking in the Balkans, Africa, and Central/South America.

Commensurate with increasing the number of infantry battalions, the Marine Corps must also reorganize certain aspects of the GCE in order to make lower echelon units lighter, more mobile, and more effective in the irregular warfare environment. The following recommendations are offered as feasible options for “rebalancing” the Marine Corps toward irregular operations:

- Increase the organic Military Police (MP) capacities within each division’s headquarters battalions, particularly in the areas of scout and patrol dogs and criminal investigators. Additionally, the logistics assets resident within divisional headquarters battalions should be consolidated in the Direct Support (DS) Combat

Logistics Regiment (CLR) assigned to each division as these capabilities are redundant and cumbersome.

- Regimental headquarters should be reorganized to enhance their irregular warfare capabilities. To begin with, the current Table of Organization (T/O) for a regimental headquarters utilizes extensive contingency billets (“C” coded billets) that were designed to be filled by reserve and augment personnel as required for combat operations. As such, the current regimental T/O is more oriented toward peacetime garrison operations than it is to combat operations. Manning regimental headquarters permanently to levels required by combat operations will increase a regimental headquarters’ ability to plan and execute “24/7” combat operations. Additionally, regimental headquarters should assume responsibility for heavy weapons such as Javelins and TOWs in order to lighten up subordinate battalions. Finally, each regiment’s motor transport and maintenance assets should migrate to their associated DS Combat Logistics Battalion (CLB) in order to reduce their organic logistical burdens and footprints.
- Each infantry battalion should also be enhanced to operate in the irregular environment. Specifically, each battalion intelligence section needs more personnel to increase its organic intelligence analysis capability particularly in the area of human intelligence (HUMINT). Also, two man scout/sniper teams should be added to each rifle platoon in a battalion to increase organic collection capabilities at the lowest possible level. Furthermore, battalion motor transport and maintenance capabilities should migrate to the DS CLB just as battalion heavy weapons should migrate to the regimental level.

- Marine artillery should reduce its large logistics footprint by leveraging advances in precision ordnance and surface to surface weapons systems (such as lighter and more mobile systems like the Expeditionary Fire Support System, High Mobility Artillery Rocket System (HIMARS), mortars, etc). As such, Marine artillery units can reduce the number of firing systems and the large logistics trains that have historically been associated with artillery operations without sacrificing the ability to deliver responsive and effective surface to surface fires. Additionally, Marine artillery units should be formally tasked with the secondary and tertiary missions of provisional infantry and civil military operations.
- The Marine Corps reserve forces' primary responsibility should be to maintain the Marine Corps's heavy MCO capability and capacity and to augment active forces in the event of a MCO. Specifically, the RC should retain an Expeditionary Fighting Vehicle (EFV) battalion (to support conventional amphibious assault missions), a tank battalion, a Light Armored Reconnaissance (LAR) battalion, and all Marine Corps heavy artillery assets. This will allow the active forces to deactivate one of its two tank battalions and consolidate its remaining EFV, LAR, and truck assets into mobility battalions that would reside at the division level and support subordinate unit mobility requirements.

The Logistics Combat Element (LCE)⁸⁵

The future operating environment will require Marine logistics forces to respond as quickly and effectively as Marine combat forces. Traditional logistics methods of staging large inventories and buffer stocks of parts and supplies at forward bases or intermediate support nodes along extended logistics chains will prove problematic as small, independent units operate

in numerous dispersed, remote, and austere locations. As such, the ability to task organize independent combat forces with minimal logistics footprints will be essential to supporting and sustaining operations. The following proposal realigns and consolidates Marine logistics assets to better support operations in the 21st century security environment.

Although the Logistics Modernization Plan published in the March 2006 Marine Corps Bulletin (MCBUL) 5400 directed key initiatives to improve logistics, the most important being the reorganization of the 1st, 2nd, and 3rd Force Service Support Groups (FSSG) from garrison-focused functional units to combat oriented Marine Logistics Groups (MLGs) ready for deployed operations, it only called for the transformation of ground logistics organizations and processes of the former FSSGs. It did not consider the considerable logistics personnel and capabilities that currently reside in the GCE.

There are nearly 2,000 logistics related MOSs (mechanics, technicians, supply and food service specialist, general engineers, heavy equipment operators, medium and heavy truck operators) in supply, maintenance, transportation, and engineer support sections embedded in the MEF Headquarters Group, Division Headquarters Battalion, and infantry regiment and battalion headquarters companies. This creates redundancy in performance of logistics chain management functions, fragmentation of the logistics effort, and a lack of control of support and distribution processes throughout the MAGTF. As a result, the Marine Logistics Modernization Plan does not correct key inefficiencies as units will still compete for supplies, repair parts, maintenance capabilities, and other logistics resources and services.

In order to best support combat forces in the future threat environment and ensure the most gain is achieved from modern information technologies, distribution systems, and supply and maintenance processes, the Marine Corps should consolidate its resources and establish full,

multi-functional logistics combat elements in direct support of the MEF headquarters element, the division headquarters element, and subordinate infantry regiments (see Figure 8).

Additionally, the maintenance and supply capabilities of the MLG functional battalions should migrate to the divisional artillery regiments and individual mechanized battalions (tanks, EFVs, and, LARs) in order to centralize platform-centric logistics requirements.

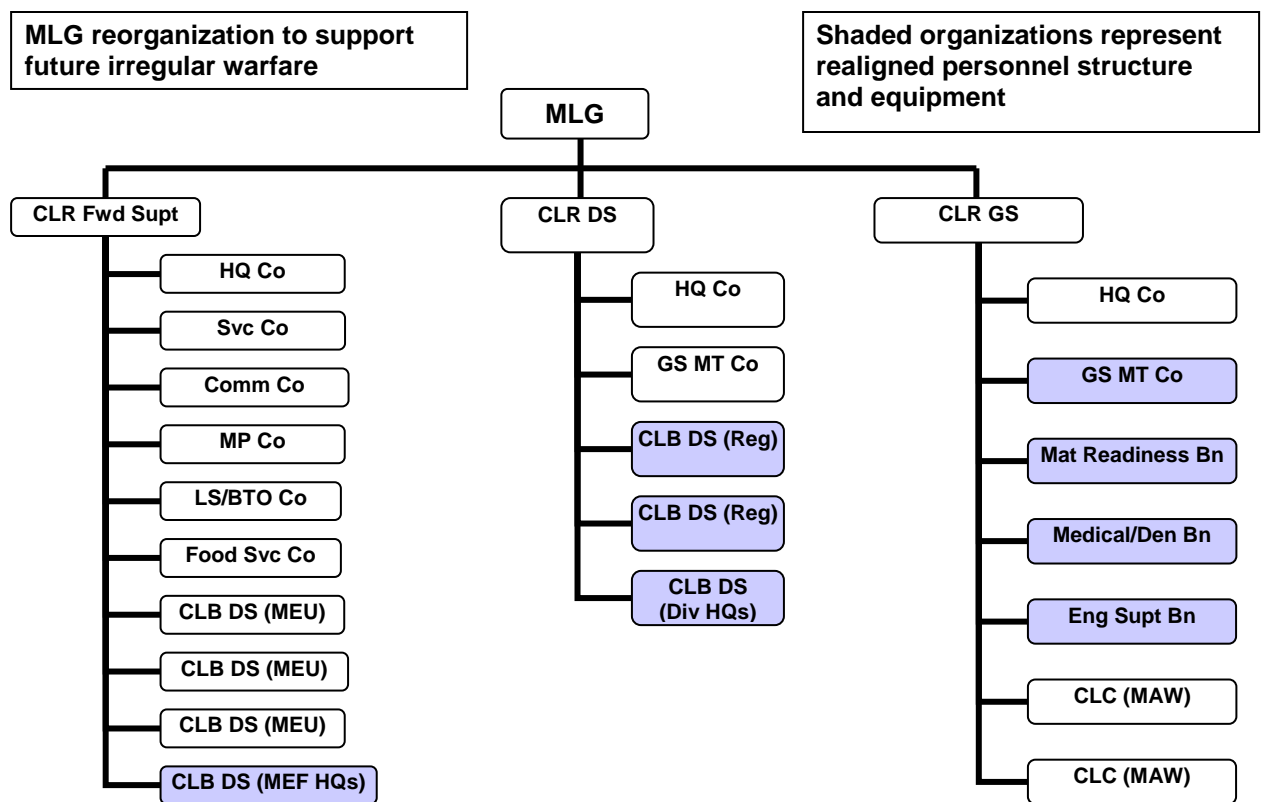


Figure 8. MLG Reorganization

Specifically, the following organizational adjustments should be made within the MLG:

- Establish a standing, multi-functional Combat Logistics Battalion (CLB) in direct support of the MEF command element and headquarters group elements from the current logistics structure resident within MEF Headquarters Group (MHG). Such an organization would provide the ability to rapidly task organize logistics elements to

support deployed MAGTF command elements (CEs) or command support elements sourced from the MEF. The capabilities of a MEF DS CLB would include communications, food service, medical, and chaplain support. Additionally, a Transportation Platoon along with a Field Maintenance company would provide the motor transport and communications, electrical, wrecker/recovery, and ordnance maintenance services required of the MEF headquarters. Also, an Engineer Support company formed from the current MHG engineer section, the Engineer Support Platoon, and the Explosive Ordnance Disposal team would provide the necessary mobile electric power, engineer utilities, construction, and material handling support needed to support MEF operations. Finally, a Supply and Distribution Platoon should be created from realigned MHG Supply Section resources.

- Establish a standing, multi-functional CLB in direct support of the Division command element, the artillery regiment, and subordinate infantry battalions from the logistics structure currently resident in the Division Headquarters battalion. Such an organization would provide the flexibility needed to rapidly task organize logistics elements to support deployed GCE command elements. Similar to the MEF Headquarters DS CLB, the Division DS CLB would be created from realigned division Headquarters Battalion personnel and equipment structure and provide requisite communications, food service, medical, and chaplain sections support at the division level. Also, a Transportation Company should be created in the Division DS CLB from the Truck Company that currently resides in the division headquarters battalions in order to consolidate motor transport maintenance and support requirements. Furthermore, division headquarters battalion engineer organizations

- (Utilities Platoon, Engineer Support Platoon, EOD team, etc) should be reorganized into an Engineer Support Company designed to provide mobile electric power, engineer utilities, construction, material handling, and heavy equipment support to division operations. Lastly, a Field Maintenance Company and a Supply and Distribution Platoon should also be created from division headquarters battalion structure in order to provide the same services that are provided to the MEF CE.
- Establish standing, multi-functional CLBs in direct support of Marine infantry regiments and their subordinate battalions from the logistics structure currently residing in infantry regiment and infantry battalion headquarters companies (this assumes a force construct of two regimental commands per infantry division). Again, the headquarters companies would provide communications, food service, medical, and chaplain support. A Transportation Company created from the DS Transportation Company that currently resides in the MLG would provide motor transportation and maintenance support. Also, an Engineer Support Company should be created from current CLB and Engineer Support Battalion (ESB) structure. Such an organization would include an Engineer Utilities Platoon (providing mobile power and water purification support), a Material Handling/Heavy Equipment Section, a Bulk Fuel Section, an Engineer Support Platoon, and an EOD Section. As with the MEF and division level CLBs, Field Maintenance companies and Supply and Distribution platoons should be formed from the current assets residing in infantry regiment and battalion headquarters companies.
 - Enhance the current General Support (GS) Combat Logistics Regiment (CLR) to improve general support transportation, maintenance, supply, health services, and

engineer support capabilities and capacities. Specifically, transportation shortfalls should be addressed by establishing a general support (GS) transportation company in the GS CLR by realigning division Truck Company assets to fill the DS CLB Transportation Company and the GS CLR Transportation Company structure requirements. Additionally, Supply and Maintenance Battalions should be consolidated into Material Readiness battalions designed to provide general support supply and maintenance functions. Moreover, the general support health services functions and structure of the current Medical and Dental Battalions should be integrated into singular Health Services Battalions. Lastly, because certain engineer functions will be performed by the Engineer Support Companies created within the DS CLBs, the Engineer Support Battalion within the GS CLR will be free to focus on general support engineering tasks such as improving the support infrastructure within the MAGTF's area of operations (AO).

Again, the purpose of the above recommendations is to offer a viable means to reducing the logistics footprint of Marine operational units by eliminating current redundancies in the maintenance, supply, distribution, and engineering functions embedded throughout the MAGTF. This recommendation not only seeks to eliminate the separate ownership of logistics between multiple commands within the MAGTF, it offers a way to synergistically leverage all available logistics capacities to increase operational reach, flexibility, and tempo for the MAGTF commander conducting dispersed, irregular warfare operations. Additionally, the development of standing combat logistics organizations oriented on deployed operations and with habitual direct support relationships to supported units will enable more efficient tailoring of forces for deployed MAGTF operations. Put another way, such a reorganization will allow the GCE to

focus on ground combat operations and, just as importantly, it will allow the logistics combat element to focus on MAGTF-wide combat logistics.

The Aviation Combat Element (ACE)

In order to address the irregular wars of the future, Marine Aviation must change its mindset in terms of how it views its role in future conflicts. In non-linear, unconventional fights, the ACE's ability to support the logistics, command and control (C2), and intelligence warfighting functions will be as valuable to defeating the enemy as providing kinetic fires to kill the enemy. This is not to say that firepower will not be required in the future (obviously, it will). However, small, rugged units possessing robust intelligence and logistical support capabilities without an obtrusive presence will be more effective in an irregular fight than a large foot printed, heavily armed ACE. Accordingly, the Marine Corps must reconsider how Marine Aviation is employed and focus on the non-technological solutions that will play the decisive role in defeating the threats of the future. In part, these non-technological solutions can be realized by changing how Marine Aviation organizes for future conflicts.

In order to meet future irregular warfare requirements, Marine aviation must change its organization even beyond the proposals of the Marine Aviation Transition Strategy (ATS).⁸⁶ Marine aviation units must be organized in garrison so they can create and sustain small, diverse aviation elements to support the diverse and numerous tasks that will arise in the 21st century security environment. The following paragraphs outline the major organizational adjustments that must be made in Marine aviation to fight the irregular wars of the future (a graphic synopsis of proposed organizational changes is delineated in Table 2 below).

Table 2. Proposed Modifications to the Aviation Transition Strategy

	MAW HQ	MAG HQ	MACG HQ	MWSG HQ	VMFA	HMLA	V/HMM	HMH	VMGR	VMAQ	VMU	VMO
ATS (AC/RC)	3 / 1	11 / 2	3 / 1	3 / 1	19 / 1	7 / 1	18 / 4	7 / 1	3 / 2	0	3 / 1	0
<i>IW Recommendation (AC/RC)</i>	<i>2 / 1</i>	<i>7 / 2</i>	<i>2 / 1</i>	<i>2 / 1*</i>	<i>13 / 0</i>	<i>8 / 0</i>	<i>16 / 4</i>	<i>8 / 0</i>	<i>3 / 2</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>3 / 1</i>	<i>3 / 1</i>

* All AC and RC MWSSs retained

- In order to obtain the force structure to modify the ACE, several units must be reduced or eliminated. As already mentioned, the Marine Aircraft Wing (MAW) headquarters in the Western Pacific (1st MAW) should be deactivated. In keeping with the philosophy that the 4GW environment necessitates a smaller, less obtrusive presence and due to the fact that there will be fewer subordinate Marine Aircraft Groups (MAGs) and squadrons, a MAW headquarters is not required. Forward deployed units can use reach back technologies to obtain CONUS-based higher guidance and/or assistance as the situation dictates.
- The Marine Corps should create composite Marine Aircraft Groups (MAG) as the standing norm both in garrison and while deployed. Although most of the Marine Corps' MAGs are currently made up of various type, model, and series (T/M/S) aircraft, they are not functionally organized for combat. The number of active component (AC) MAG headquarters should be reduced and the remainder of the MAGs should be reorganized along functional lines. Specifically, each MAG needs fixed wing (FW) and rotary wing (RW) capabilities that can be drawn upon to address

the variety of potential combat missions the IW environment will offer. Moreover, a direct support (DS) relationship should be established between MAGs and regiments in order to facilitate unit training and the establishment of Standing Operating Procedures (SOPs). More importantly, this DS relationship will foster the personal habitual relationships between units that is so crucial in combat. In the future, MAG span of control should not be an issue as the Marine Corps reduces the number of its fixed wing squadrons, draws down the number of various T/M/S aircraft (EA-6B, F/A-18, AV-8B, CH-53D and CH-46), and streamlines intermediate level maintenance support. A notional Marine Aircraft Wing (MAW) with composite MAGs is outlined in Figure 9.

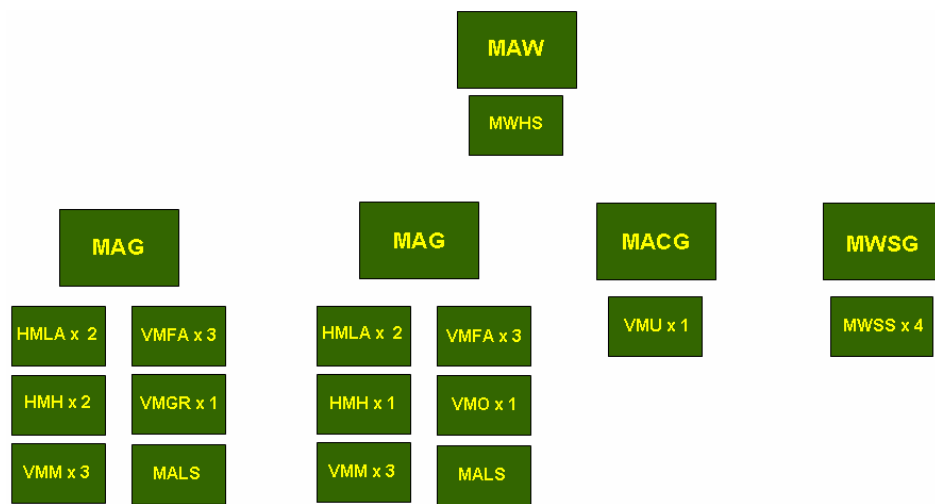


Figure 9. Notional MAW with Composite MAGs

- In order to provide required aviation support without a heavy footprint, Marine Aviation must also be able to task organize all squadrons (regardless of the type of aircraft) to levels lower than historical norms. To fight in tomorrow's threat environment, aviation units should be prepared to deploy small elements of various

T/M/S supported by small logistics and airfield support detachments. Task organizing in this manner will require an increase in manning for low density Military Occupational Specialties (MOSs) such as seat shop mechanics, FLIR technicians, and imagery analysts; procurement of additional aviation maintenance and ground support equipment; and additional training for maintenance Marines to be qualified as Collateral Duty Inspectors (CDI) and Quality Assurance Representatives (QAR) in numerous T/M/S aircraft.

- The number of Marine Fighter Attack (VMFA) squadrons should be reduced to thirteen AC squadrons and no RC squadrons. The current plan to buy 192 JSFs for twenty total TACAIR squadrons mandates squadron PMAAs of either 10 or 14 aircraft (depending on mission tasking).⁸⁷ A more efficient construct is to reduce the number of squadrons to thirteen with each squadron possessing sixteen aircraft. This provides each squadron a much more effective capability to task organize to support several small, dispersed forces while maintaining squadron capacity to continue training in garrison or deploy as required to support simultaneous operations.
- Recent experience in Afghanistan and Iraq and the Marine Corps's move toward Distributed Operations necessitate more heavy lift capability to address the wide range of operations that will be required in an irregular warfare environment. The ATS effectively addresses manning shortfalls, but it does not adequately address the imbalance in the medium-to-heavy lift ratio that exists today. Therefore, it is recommended that the number of AC heavy lift squadrons (HMHs) be increased from seven (ATS goal) to eight and the number of AC medium lift squadrons (VMMs – a.k.a. MV-22 Osprey squadrons) should be reduced from eighteen (ATS goal) to

sixteen. This plan calls for the Primary Mission Aircraft Assigned (PMAA) for HMHs to be maintained at sixteen aircraft, the PMAA for VMMs be reduced from twelve aircraft to ten, and the reserve HMH units to be deactivated. Not only will this adjustment provide more heavy lift aircraft to address future warfare requirements, it will also facilitate a more optimum medium-to-heavy lift ratio (VMM:HMM) of 10:6 for MEUs and 30:24 for MEBs.⁸⁸

- The number of AC light attack helicopter (HMLA) squadrons should also be increased. The Marine Corps today lacks adequate AC HMLA capacity to support existing requirements and emerging requirements generated by today's Global War on Terrorism (GWOT). It is expected that HMLA squadrons will continue to be extensively tasked in the future as small war demands increase throughout the world. Unfortunately, the HMLA "Yankee Zulu" program is designed to upgrade existing airframes (i.e., the Marine Corps is not buying new aircraft to replace existing inventory). As a result, HMLA PMAA, particularly AH-1 PMAA, is critically short and will continue to be short for the foreseeable future. Therefore, the remaining reserve component (RC) HMLA squadron should be deactivated, the RC airframes should be transferred to the AC, and the number of AC HMLA squadrons should be increased to eight as compared to the ATS proposal of seven.
- The ATS effectively addresses the Marine Corps' current shortage in Unmanned Aerial Vehicle (UAV) capacity by increasing the AC squadrons from two to three as well as adding a single RC squadron. However, Marine Unmanned Aerial Vehicle (VMU) squadrons are currently organized with only one ground station and, as a result, they must deploy as a whole unit in order to execute their mission. VMUs of

the future should be manned and equipped to task organize into independent sections that provide full intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (ISR) support to small Marine forces engaged in irregular warfare activities.

- The Marine Corps should develop irregular warfare oriented squadrons. The purpose of this type of squadron, a Marine Observation (VMO) squadron, is to provide command and control, ISR, logistics, and fire support of dispersed MAGTF combat and non-combat operations. Conceptually, these squadrons would be designed to task organize down to the lowest levels (down to a section, if required). They would have small logistics footprints and would be fully operable from austere sites such as dirt or grass landing strips. The squadron's aircraft should be rugged, inexpensive and easy to maintain as well as possessing adequate small arms and manpad protection (e.g., armor, flares, and IRCM gear). "Off-the-shelf" solutions should be pursued over traditional procurement processes for aircraft and aircraft systems. Specifically, two aircraft are needed to address IW requirements:
 - A tactical logistics support aircraft to support local, small unit logistics and civil-military operations requirements. This aircraft should be smaller and less sophisticated than an MV-22 and have the capability to haul anything from Marines to lumber.
 - A two-seat tactical C2/ISR/Fires aircraft that possesses long loiter time; a large payload (to include precision ordnance capabilities); a robust IR/EO/TV sensor package with IR pointer, laser designation and data link capabilities (e.g., the Litening pod); and an extensive communications suite to include a digital network capability. A "souped-up" AD-1 Skyraider comes to mind.

Train the entire MAGTF for the irregular fight.

In response to current ongoing operations in Iraq and Afghanistan, the Marine Corps has taken several significant steps toward improving training for the irregular warfare environment. Most notable of these initiatives are the creation of the Center for Advanced Operational Cultural Learning (CAOCL), the establishment of pre-deployment exercises such as the GCE-oriented Mojave Viper and ACE-oriented Desert Talon exercises, and the publication of a joint Army and Marine Corps counterinsurgency manual (Marine Corps Warfighting Publication (MCWP) 3-33.5/Field Manual (FM) 3-24, *Counterinsurgency*). However, these are just initial steps. More can be done.

To begin with, habitual personal relationships between lower echelon GCE, ACE, and LCE units should be established in training in order to foster habitual relationships in execution. The current operational environment has forced the Marine Corps into forming deploying MAGTFs on an ad hoc basis.⁸⁹ Units from the west coast are often joined with east coast units to create deploying MAGTFs. Such an arrangement, however, does not facilitate continuous and effective training. Often, the only time the elements of a MAGTF can actually train together is during showcase training exercises like Mojave Viper and Desert Talon (and these training events do not guarantee that the exercise participants will actually deploy together). Single training events, while better than nothing, do not establish the familiarity required to operate at optimal effectiveness immediately upon arriving in theater.

By leveraging the organizational changes presented in Recommendation #2 above (specifically composite MAGs and combat logistics units in direct support of specified GCE units), unit deployment cycles could be more easily managed to permit continuous interaction in

garrison. Such relationships would afford units the opportunity to regularly train together in part task training events as well as in large scale exercises. The net result of habitually tied units executing realistic, free play training events on a regular basis will be the improvement of employing and sustaining small, independent, task organized units (“mini-MAGTFs”) in austere conditions as well as the facilitation of long-term SOPs.

In addition, all elements of the MAGTF must do a better job of training to the principles of maneuver warfare. While the Distributed Operations concept seeks to enhance the ability of small, dispersed units to operate independently, it is too narrowly focused on the ground combat units. The same concept should be applied to aviation and logistics units. Training should be focused on developing aviators and logisticians that are entrusted to make dispersed and independent decisions based on their understanding of commander’s intent, the authority resident in the qualifications they have earned and the positions they hold, and their knowledge of the friendly concept of operations. By adopting such a philosophical approach to how Marine units train and execute, the bureaucratic and cumbersome command and control processes that stymie operations on the non-linear unconventional battlefield can be overcome in favor of more flexible, networked processes. Recent experiences in OIF indicate that such a shift is required as we have seen that the trend toward more centralized control of combat activities is counterproductive to effective execution in an irregular warfare environment.

Finally, in terms of training, Marine Aviation, specifically Marine FW aviation, requires the largest shift in training focus if it is to effectively train for the future threat environment. For the most part, the training syllabi in the RW Training and Readiness (T&R) Manuals already address the basic assault and fire support missions required in an irregular war. However, an enormous amount of the Marine FW community’s “blue dollar” budget is spent on developing

aircraft and training aircrew to perform conventional missions that could be executed by either the Air Force or the Navy. If the Marine Corps accepted risk and trusted in interdependence in MCO-related missions (Offensive and Defensive Counter Air, Suppression of Enemy Air Defenses (SEAD), deep precision strike against industrial and/or strategic targets, etc), Marine Aviation could increase its focus on those missions that are most required in *both* unconventional and conventional fights. Specifically, those missions include command and control missions such as tactical air coordinator (airborne) (TAC(A) and forward air controller (airborne) (FAC(A); ISR missions such as armed reconnaissance, convoy escort, and imagery and signal intelligence collection; and Fire Support and Fire Support Coordination missions to include close air support, FAC(A) employment, and call for fire.

Chapter 5

Conclusion

We still persist in studying a type of warfare that no longer exists and that we shall never fight again, while we pay only passing attention to the war we lost in Indochina and the one we are about to lose in Algeria...The result of this shortcoming is that the army is not prepared to confront an adversary employing arms and methods the army itself ignores. It has, therefore, no chance of winning.

Roger Trinquier, *Modern Warfare: A French View of Counterinsurgency*⁹⁰

What does 'being caught unawares' mean? It means being unprepared. Without preparedness superiority is not real superiority and there can be no initiative either.

Mao Zedong

Given a changing situation, there are several courses of action one can choose from. One can do nothing; one can do a little bit to mitigate the impact of change; or one can do something dramatic that seizes the initiative and fundamentally alters the dynamics of the situation. Up until 9/11, the U.S. chose the first course of action based on its past successes with little regard to its past failures. This nation built a military that the Soviet Union dared not challenge. When given the opportunity to fight, the American military had never been defeated on the battlefield. By the time Desert Storm was unleashed, it was clear that the American military had perfected the art of mechanized warfare. Surely Vietnam, Beirut, and Somalia were anomalies that pertained more to political miscalculations than they did to our ability to wage war. Why fix a machine that wasn't broken particularly when a rising Chinese threat loomed so ominously on

the horizon? Surely, we had it right and technology would not only make us better, it would make us more dominant.

9/11, however, served as a terrible wake up call that challenged long held institutional assumptions. Despite our best efforts to define the threats to our nation in terms that fit our mirror imaged perspective, 9/11 demonstrated that our past successes did not accurately reflect our ability to dominate a security environment that has been changing since the end of WWII. Clearly, something had to be done. As a result, the seeds of change were reluctantly sewn in the form of “transformation.”

Unfortunately, transformation took the form of the second course of action, “doing a little bit.” Instead of recognizing that the fundamental nature of warfare had changed and that we must fundamentally change with it, transformation took a half step in the direction of addressing this reality by making marginal changes to the components of the national security structure vice changing the structure as a whole. As a result, while greater attention has been given to the “low end” of the spectrum of conflict, the American military remains committed to its cultural bias toward expensive high tech weapon systems, information dominance technologies, and bureaucratically driven organizations. Hence, our emphasis remains on the key components that gave us dominance over past enemies instead of focusing on what is needed to dominate our current and future enemies. Simply stated, we continue to reference warfare within the context of what we thought we knew for the past century instead of what we have experienced in the past 40 years.

Such an approach is not a solution. “Doing a little bit” will only treat the symptoms of the problem; it will not attack the disease. It is a holding action that will inevitably fail. First of all, the nation fiscally cannot afford to have each service maintain like capabilities across the

spectrum of conflict. It is simply too expensive to maintain. Second, to have each service spread their limited resources across the spectrum of conflict for “just in case” purposes dilutes the strength of our military as a whole. The adage “a mile wide and an inch deep” usually denotes weakness, not strength (or readiness for that matter). Lastly, we must ask ourselves, can we afford to have all the services hold out for the next high end fight that (doubtfully) *could* occur? Or does it make more sense *to prepare for the fight we are in today and will continue to fight tomorrow?*

The fact of the matter is that warfare in the 21st century cannot be reduced to simple denominators such as competition for natural resources and world markets or aging political divisions between past or perceived foes. Granted, globalization will yield increased competition, but it will also create means of mitigation in the form of politico-economic symbiosis. The enemy we face does not view his violent activities as an “extension of politics” in the pursuit of national interests. He sees the conflict as an ideological “cage match” in which the outcome will not be measured in terms of a victor and a vanquished, but rather, in terms of a survivor and an annihilated. As such, we face an *ideological* fight that will not end with one decisive campaign. What is required is a generational commitment that our nation really has not come to grips with yet.

We must choose the third course of action and commit to the *institutional* changes needed to address the *environment* in which the enemies of today and tomorrow thrive. As opposed to any other time in human history, warfare is now defined more by social, economic, political, and religious factors than it is by pure military factors of force ratios, equipment, and firepower. *Real* change in the form of new legislation that mandates interagency “jointness” is required to overcome the institutional inertia, organizational resource competition, bureaucratic lethargy,

and diffused focus that continue to plague our national efforts to engage the 21st century threat environment.

For the Department of Defense, the essential question comes down to one of economy of force. Where should we weight our resources and where should we accept risk? This means revisiting Title 10 responsibilities and dividing the spectrum of conflict amongst the services based on *capabilities*. The Army and Air Force need to maintain their “heavy fight” capabilities that have proven so effective in deterring any viable “near peer” conventional challenges. The Navy and Marine Corps should leverage their unique expeditionary capabilities in order to address the irregular threats to the nation’s interests. This is not to say that any service will be excluded from any phase of an operation. It is simply a matter of mission focus, capabilities, and delineation of main and supporting efforts depending on the nature of the situation.

Unfortunately, most of these initiatives are beyond the control of the Marine Corps. The good news is that the Marine Corps does not have to change that much to shift its weight toward the irregular end of the spectrum of conflict. Moreover, it has the means and capacity to make the required internal institutional changes *now* that will ensure readiness for *tomorrow*. The Marine Corps already has the doctrine (maneuver warfare), the organization (the MAGTF), the expeditionary culture, the concepts (Distributed Operations), and, most importantly, the ethos and martial spirit needed to operate effectively in any tactical environment, but particularly in the irregular warfare environment. Until the Marine Corps gets the “green light” to divest itself of a legislatively mandated mission that was assigned 60 years ago to address a past security environment, it will have change on its own volition.

Fortunately, institutional prescience and courage to change are lasting legacies deeply rooted in the Marine Corps. If readiness is the perennial purpose of the Marine Corps, then the

Marine Corps must ask the question, “Ready for what?” The American military is already prepared for month long, hi tech, low casualty applications of combat power. The real heavy lifting of the 21st century will be found in the frequent and difficult dirty little wars around the globe against flourishing irregular and asymmetric threats that simply will not fade away. Not only is the Marine Corps the best force to handle this job, the job is clearly in keeping with the Marine Corps’s tradition of “being the most ready when the nation is least ready.” It is time for the Marine Corps to embrace its position as the “911 force for a post-9-11 world.”

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- ²⁸ Following Operation DESERT STORM in 1991, the Marine Corps acted upon lessons learned to address corps-level limitations in planning, command and control, fires, information management, sustainment, rear area operations, intelligence, et al. As a result, the MAGTF Staff Training Program (MSTP) was established in the early 1990s as an organization dedicated to studying, developing, and teaching corps-level planning and execution with the expressed intent of filling a perceived doctrinal void resident within the Marine Corps. MSTP-run MEF Exercises (MEFEXs), loosely modeled after the Army’s Battle Command Training Program’s (BCTP) Warfighter Exercises, became a major Marine Corps training event for each of the three MEFs. The only exception was II MEF in Camp Lejeune, NC. Although II MEF participated in several MEFEXs in the early to mid 1990s, it opted to discontinue MEFEX training events and focus less on corps-level operations as it became more of a MEU sourcing organization. In 2000, however, II MEF began participating in MEFEXs again. Simultaneously in the 1990s, the Marine Corps Combat Development Command (MCCDC) exerted considerable effort in developing doctrine focused on refining MEF-level planning and execution procedures in a conventional fight (e.g. the Marine Corps

Planning Process, MEF Command and Control procedures and systems, Rear Area Operations, Information Management, MEF Fires, Movement Control, etc).

²⁹ Col Thomas X. Hammes, *The Sling and the Stone: On War in the 21st Century* (St. Paul, MN: Zenith Press, 2004), 9.

³⁰ Eugen W. Cobble, H. H. Gaffney, and Dmitry Gorenburg, *For the Record: All U.S. Forces' Responses to Situations, 1970-2000 (with additions covering 2000-2003)*, CIM D0008414.A3/1Rev. (Alexandria, VA: Center for Strategic Studies, May 2005), 2-3.

³¹ Small Wars Center of Excellence website (accessed 20 November 2006). The Small Wars Center of Excellence defines small wars as follows: "Small Wars are operations undertaken under executive authority wherein military force is combined with diplomatic pressure in the internal or external affairs of another state whose government is unstable, inadequate, or unsatisfactory for the preservation of life and such interests as are determined by the foreign policy of our Nation."

³² DoDD 5100.1, *Functions of the Department of Defense*, 13.

³³ Marine Corps Doctrinal Publication (MCDP) 3, *Expeditionary Operations*, 16 April 1998, 5.

³⁴ *Ibid*, 11.

³⁵ Department of Defense, 2006 *Quadrennial Defense Review*, Secretary of Defense cover letter.

³⁶ *Ibid*, v-vi.

³⁷ Michele A. Flournoy, "Did the Pentagon Get the Quadrennial Defense Review Right?", in *National Security and Decision Making, AY 2007* (Air War College Course Reader) (Maxwell AFB, AL: Air University Press, 2006), 739.

³⁸ 34th Commandant of the Marine Corps, 2006 Commandant's Planning Guidance (November 2006), 3.

³⁹ Global Issues That Affect Everyone, "In Context: US Military Spending Versus Rest of the World,"

<http://www.globalissues.org/Geopolitics/ArmsTrade/Spending.asp> (accessed 27 January 2007).

⁴⁰ Senator John McCain (address, annual GOPAC dinner, Washington, DC, 16 Nov 06).

⁴¹ Briefing, LtGen Emerson Gardner, Deputy Commandant, Programs and Resources, Headquarters Marine Corps, subject: Briefing to the Capabilities Assessment Group, 16 March 2006.

⁴² Except where otherwise noted, all budget and program data is drawn from two briefs given to the Commandant of the Marine Corps's 2015 Capabilities Assessment Group at Marine Corps Base Quantico, VA in March 2006. The first brief, "Brief to the Capabilities Assessment Group", was given on 16 Mar 06 by LtGen Emerson Gardner, USMC, Deputy Commandant for Programs and Resources. The second brief, "Warfighting Front End Assessments: PR-07, POM-08, POM-10", was given on 17 Mar 06 by Colonel Len Blasiol, USMC, Director, MAGTF Integration Division, Capabilities Development Directorate.

⁴³ Although the U.S. Navy actually pays for Marine Corps aviation programs, the costs of these programs must be assessed in terms of total Marine Corps procurement requirements in order to accurately portray the budget requirements of the Marine Corps to maintain its general purpose character and support its Title 10 responsibilities.

⁴⁴ Col Gary Van Gysel, USMC (Retired) (Boeing Representative at MCAS Beaufort, SC), interview by author, 29 Jan 07. On the day of the interview, the Marine MV-22 training squadron began the day with a 38% mission capable rate. The mandated mission capable rate for the MV-22 program is 80%.

⁴⁵ United States Government Accountability Office, *Joint Strike Fighter: DoD Plans to Enter Production before Testing Demonstrates Acceptable Performance*, GAO-06-356 Joint Strike Fighter Acquisition Report to Congressional Committees (Washington, DC: United States Government Accountability Office, March 2006), Report Highlights page.

⁴⁶ *Marine Corps Operating Concepts for a Changing Security Environment* (Quantico, VA: Marine Corps Combat Development Command, March 2006), iv.

⁴⁷ Briefing, BGen Robert E. Milstead, Jr., Director of USMC Public Affairs to USMC officers at Air University, subject: Current Marine Corps Issues, 13 Oct 06.

⁴⁸ House, *CBO Testimony: Statement of J. Michael Gilmore, Assistant Director, and Eric J. Labs, Principal Analyst, Potential Costs of the Navy's 2006 Shipbuilding Plan before the Subcommittee on Projection Forces, Committee on Armed Services, U.S. House of Representatives*, 30 March 2006, 1-7. In addition to Marine Corps specific budget requirements, one must also consider the costs associated with the Navy's shipbuilding plan designed to support Marine Corps operations (i.e. amphibious and MPF(F) ships). According to the Congressional Budget Office (CBO), the Navy has underestimated the cost of procuring one MPF(F) squadron of 12 ships by \$1.9 billion (the CBO estimates the cost to be \$13 billion vice the Navy's estimate of \$11.1 billion). Additionally, the CBO estimates the average per unit cost to replace amphibious ships to be \$2.3 billion vice the Navy's estimate of \$1.4 billion. Overall, through 2035, the CBO estimates that the Navy's proposed shipbuilding plan to achieve a 313

ship force would cost about \$20.5 billion annually, or about 70 percent more than the funding provided for ship construction over the past six years.

⁴⁹ Briefing to 2015 Capabilities Assessment Group, MAGTF Integration Division, Capabilities Development Directorate, subject: Warfighting Front End Assessments: PR-07, POM-08, POM-10, 17 Mar 06.

⁵⁰ *Marine Corps Midrange Threat Estimate 2005-2015*, Defense Intelligence Report DOD-1586-001-05 (Quantico, VA: Marine Corps Intelligence Activity, July 2005), vi.

⁵¹ Ibid, xi.

⁵² Briefing to 2015 Capabilities Assessment Group, Marine Corps Combat Development Command, subject: Marine Corps Operating Concepts for a Changed Security Environment, March 2006.

⁵³ Ibid. The brief referenced Appendix A of the Marine Corps Intelligence Activity's *Marine Corps Midrange Threat Estimate: 2005-2015* which lists twenty "states of interest that represent a wide range of potential future security challenges for the Marine Corps." Additionally, reference was made to Thomas Barnett's book "The Pentagon's New Map" which identifies "Future Hot Spots". Finally, the National Geographic Society provided the following data on the world's top ten proven oil reserves (as of 2004). Reserves are measured in millions of barrels of oil:

Saudi Arabia:	261,000
Iran	125,000
Iraq	115,000
Kuwait	99,000
UAE	97,800
Venezuela	77,800
Russia	60,000
Libya	36,000
Nigeria	25,000
US	22,677

Additionally, the world's top ten annual oil producers (in 2002) were also identified in the brief:

Russia	2703
Saudi Arabia	2500
US	2097
Iran	1252
China	1243
Mexico	1160
Norway	1149
UK	842
Venezuela	834
Nigeria	710

⁵⁴ Department of the Navy. *The Naval Operations Concept*. 1 September 2006, 9.

⁵⁵ Marine Corps Midrange Threat Estimate 2005-2015, 9.

⁵⁶ James Traub, "China's African Adventure: Where the West Sees a Need for Reform, Beijing Sees Nothing But Resources and Opportunity", *The New York Times Magazine*, Section 6, November 19, 2006, 77.

⁵⁷ *Marine Corps Midrange Threat Estimate 2005-2015*, 14.

⁵⁸ Ibid, A-10.

⁵⁹ Ibid, A-7.

⁶⁰ Ibid, 67.

⁶¹ The Offshore Library, "The Expatriation Trend," Cyberhaven.com, <http://www.cyberhaven.com/offshorelibrary/expatriation.html> (accessed 27 January 2007).

⁶² James Traub, "China's African Adventure: Where the West Sees a Need for Reform, Beijing Sees Nothing but Resources and Opportunity," *The New York Times Magazine*, 19 November 2006/Section 6: 74-79.

⁶³ Center for Emerging Threats and Opportunities (CETO), *Flashpoints: "The Short Version"* (Quantico, VA: Marine Corps Combat Development Command, 2006), 22-28. CETO analyzed five critical factors in determining instability ranking: Governance, Demographics, Religion, Water, and Energy. The study examined and ranked 158 nations based on their potential to experience future conflict due to one or more of these factors.

⁶⁴ *The Naval Operations Concept*, 9.

⁶⁵ Catherine Zara Raymond, "Maritime Terrorism in Southeast Asia: A Risk Assessment", *Terrorism and Political Violence*, 18:239-257, 2006 (Volume 18, Summer 2006, Number 2), 240.

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- ⁶⁶ *Marine Corps Midrange Threat Estimate 2005-2015*, A-10 – A-11.
- ⁶⁷ Raymond, “Maritime Terrorism in Southeast Asia,” 245-246.
- ⁶⁸ *Marine Corps Midrange Threat Estimate 2005-2015*, A-11.
- ⁶⁹ Ibid, 31.
- ⁷⁰ Raymond, “Maritime Terrorism in Southeast Asia,” 248.
- ⁷¹ Ibid, 253-254.
- ⁷² Al Qaeda statement quoted in Raymond, “Maritime Terrorism in Southeast Asia,” 241.
- ⁷³ Daniel Marquis, “A Peaceful Solution to Divided Korea is Impossible: The United States is the Problem,” (unpublished paper at Marine Corps Intelligence Activity), 1-3.
- ⁷⁴ *Marine Corps Midrange Threat Estimate 2005-2015*, A-12.
- ⁷⁵ Ibid, A-12.
- ⁷⁶ It is beyond the scope of this paper to offer an in depth analysis of Chinese strategic culture and the employment of Chinese military force in pursuit of national objectives. However, the conclusions presented are drawn from an examination of each major Chinese military action since the Korean War (this includes the Taiwan Straits crises of 1954-55, 1958, and 1995-96; the Sino-Indian War of 1962; the Sino-Soviet Border Conflicts of 1969; and the Sino-Vietnamese War of 1979). The primary sources for this study were Alastair Iain Johnston’s *Cultural Realism: Strategic Culture and Grand Strategy in Chinese History*; Andrew Scobell’s *China’s Use of Military Force: Beyond the Great Wall and the Long March*; and *Chinese Warfighting: The PLA Experience Since 1949* edited by Mark A. Ryan, David M. Finkelstein, and Michael A. McDevitt. Additionally, Dr. Xiaoming Zhang’s Air War College elective, “China’s Use of Force: A Case Study of a Nonwestern Approach to Warfare” provided valuable insight into Chinese strategic concepts, perceptions, and history.
- ⁷⁷ *Marine Corps Midrange Threat Estimate 2005-2015*, 63.
- ⁷⁸ Traub, “China’s African Adventure,” 77-79.
- ⁷⁹ Ibid, 79.
- ⁸⁰ Thomas P. M. Barnett, *The Pentagon’s New Map: War and Peace in the Twenty-First Century* (New York, NY: The Berkley Publishing Group, 2004), 185.
- ⁸¹ David Galula, *Counterinsurgency Warfare: Theory and Practice* (1964; repr., St. Petersburg, FL: Hailer Publishing, 2005), 93-94.
- ⁸² The recommendations offered in this paper are drawn primarily from the unpublished *Irregular Warfare Final Report* dated 2 June 2006 of the Irregular Warfare Working Group that was part of the 2015 Capabilities Assessment Group (CAG) chartered by then Commandant General Michael Hagee in March 2006. Along with the author, the following officers had a primary role in writing the unpublished *Irregular Warfare Final Report*: Col Philip L. Smith USMC (group leader), Col Thomas D. Jagusch USMCR, Col James B. Seaton USMC, LtCol Paul Callan USMC, LtCol Doug Henderson USMC, and LtCol Thomas J. Hartshorne USMC. Additionally, the recommendations offered in this paper are limited to the operating forces. Based on the author’s experience while a member of the CAG, manpower structure savings within the Marine Corps’s supporting establishment were limited and as such fall outside the scope of this paper.
- ⁸³ This analysis does not include President Bush’s decision in January 2007 to increase the Marine Corps’s end-strength. Clearly, more Marines will facilitate the creation of more infantry battalions. However, it is important to note that, even without a large increase in manpower, the Marine Corps can generate more infantry battalion capacity from its current force structure to better address the requirements of the 21st Century security environment.
- ⁸⁴ Current requirements to support ongoing Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF) were not factored into this analysis.
- ⁸⁵ *Irregular Warfare Final Report*. The logistics concepts presented in this paper are drawn exclusively from the work done by LtCol Doug Henderson, USMC, while assigned to the USMC 2015 Capabilities Assessment Group from March to June of 2006. Additionally, all facts and figures presented in the LCE portion of this paper were drawn from LtCol Henderson’s research and analysis presented in the *Irregular Warfare Final Report*.
- ⁸⁶ Briefing, APP-1, Headquarters Marine Corps, subject: Marine Aviation Transition Strategy: Update to Capabilities Assessment Group, 13 Apr 06.
- ⁸⁷ Ibid.
- ⁸⁸ Briefing, Mission Area Analysis (MAA) Branch, Marine Corps Combat Development Command, subject: Assault Support Capabilities Analysis, 5 Dec 05.
- ⁸⁹ This is not the case for units identified as subordinate MAGTF elements of Marine Expeditionary Units (MEUs). MEU units are afforded the opportunity to train together as part of a formalized training syllabus in preparation for deployment.

⁹⁰ Roger Trinquier, *Modern Warfare: A French View of Counterinsurgency*, (1961; repr., London: Pall Mall Press Ltd., 1964), 3.